

Hafa Adai!

FAA to award CNMI \$110,000 for Pagan airstrip. PAGE 2
Kilili: 384 claims for PUA, PFUC are still pending. PAGE 3

\$1

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CNMI has 8th COVID-related death



ATTENTION, LITTER PATROL!

A mound of garbage is piled in this corner of Wing Beach, which is one of the more popular beaches on Saipan, creating an eyesore and attracting vermin and stray animals to the site.

MARK FARMER

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The CNMI reported its eighth COVID-19-related death Sunday night, together with news that 47 new positive cases of COVID-19 were

Acute manpower shortage at DOC

» **'They're not even on skeleton crew right now'**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A few Corrections officers and some inmates at the Depart-

ment of Corrections in Susupe have tested positive for COVID-19, causing a severe manpower shortage at DOC. Some police officers were then sent to DOC to shore up its manpower but a few of them also caught the COVID-19 vi-

See ACUTE on Page 4

Vaiagae questions 'audacity' of 3 JGO members

» **Villagomez to create special committee on impeachment**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Grace "Pitu" Sablan Vaiagae questioned yesterday what she called the "audacity" of three Democrat lawmakers to pass judgment on Gov. Ralph DLG. Torres'

Vaiagae spending priorities when they themselves

allegedly committed heinous crimes against persons and, in

See VAIAGAE on Page 4

COMMUNITY VULNERABILITY

LEGEND:

- Red: Least safe
- Orange
- Yellow
- Blue
- Green: Safest

Source: Office of the Governor

4 DAYS
BEFORE CHRISTMAS

confirmed on Dec. 17 and Dec. 18.

With the newest positive count, the CNMI's total tally of COVID-19 cases now stands at 2,422, with 2,140 identified from community

See DEATH on Page 4

AT A GLANCE

As of 5:10pm, Dec. 20, 2021

VACCINATIONS IN THE CNMI

Eligible Population: 91.7%

Fully Vaccinated: 91.7%

Days since last community transmission: 2

Pfizer/BioNTech			
Initiated:	36,171	36,171	
Fully Vaccinated:	33,569	33,569	
Moderna			
Initiated:	5,262	5,262	
Fully Vaccinated:	4,828	4,828	
Janssen			
Fully vaccinated:	1,117	1,117	

GUAM	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	19,369	3	19,372
Recovered	18,880	0	18,880
Active	219	3	222
Deaths	270	0	270

SAIPAN	OLD	NEW	TOTAL
Positive	2,375	47	2,422
Traced via Travel Screening	282	0	282
Traced via Community Screening	2,093	47	2,140
Deaths	7	1	8

Source: Joint Information Center - Guam, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., <https://www.vaccinecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/>

CURRENT COVID-19 VACCINATIONS



Source: vaccinecnmi.com/vax-dashboard/

INSIDE



BUSINESS

Restaurants are entering another winter of the coronavirus pandemic anxious about what's ahead.

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NATION

Sen. Joe Manchin delivers a death blow to President Joe Biden's \$2 trillion domestic initiative.

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LIFE & STYLE

"Spider-Man" is now the third best opening of all time with \$253 million in ticket sales.

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Local

FAA to award CNMI \$110,000 for Pagan airstrip

» CNMI airports to receive \$6M in all from infrastructure law » First of five rounds, airports to submit projects

The U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Aviation Administration will award \$110,000 for the Pagan airstrip, as part of the estimated \$6 million the FAA will award to the Northern Mariana Islands from funding made available by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law.

According to a U.S. Department of Transportation news

release last Friday, it said that the following Northern Mariana Islands airports are estimated to receive funding during the first year of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law:

- Pagan Airstrip in Shomu-Shon: \$110,000
- Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International on Rota: \$1,007,374
- Tinian International on

Timian: \$1,026,751
■ Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport on Saipan: \$3,873,026

For an interactive map and listing of funding for all Northern Mariana Islands airports, visit <https://www.faa.gov/bil/airport-infrastructure>.

The FAA news release stated that the money can be invested in runways, taxiways,

safety and sustainability projects, as well as terminal, airport-transit connections and roadway projects. This is the first of five annual rounds of funding CNMI airports will receive.

"The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has given us a once-in-a-generation opportunity to build safer and more sustainable airports that connect individuals to jobs and communities to the world," said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. "With this new

funding, urban, regional and rural airports across the country now can get to work on projects that have waited for years, modernizing their infrastructure and building a better America."

CNMI airports can submit projects they wish to use the funds on for FAA review in the coming weeks. The FAA encourages airports to prioritize projects that increase airport safety, equity and sustainability. The agency also plans

to conduct outreach with the minority business community on these opportunities at airports across the nation.

The money comes from the Airport Infrastructure Grant program, one of three new aviation programs created by the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The law provides \$15 billion over five years for this program. The FAA estimates the backlog of airport modernization and safety projects totals \$43.6 billion. (PR)

COVID-19 Community Center in Kobler now open

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A new COVID-19 Community Center that is intended to be a hub for all COVID-19 matters was opened yesterday at the Koblerville Youth Center. The center is open seven days a week, including holidays, from 8am to 4pm.

As explained during yesterday's opening, the COVID-19 Community Center is where individuals can get confirmatory testing done, obtain

their COVID-19 results, get assessed for monoclonal antibody treatment, and obtain guidance on all things related to COVID-19.

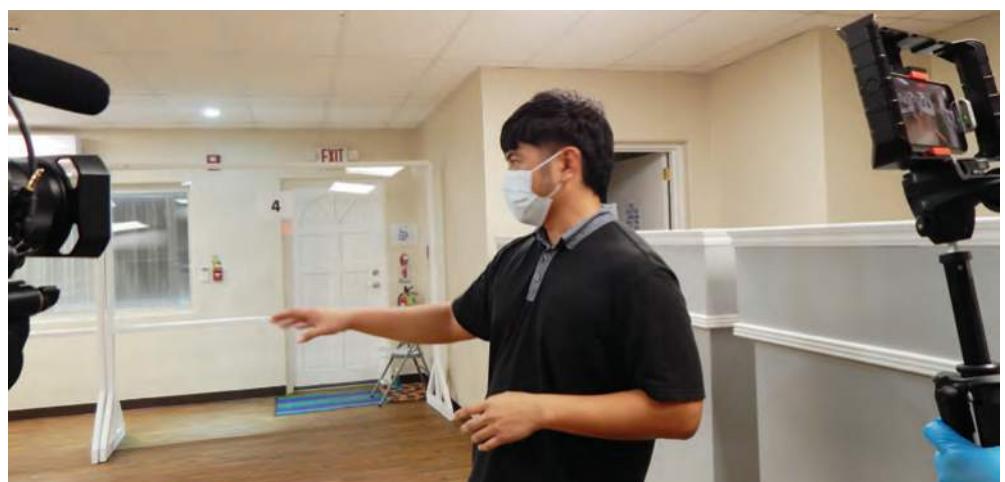
Karen Buettner, who is a Federal Emergency Management Agency employee and a nurse, said that she has so far provided support to the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. where needed, administering monoclonal antibody treatment and aiding CHCC with its vaccination operations. Now she is conducting assess-

ments at the center.

Buettner explained that she will be assessing COVID-positive individuals if they are eligible to receive monoclonal antibody treatment. If qualified, Buettner said she and the center can make direct referrals to CHCC's Alternate Care Site at Kanoa Resort Saipan.

Buettner said the center is a big plus, as it redirects pressure away from the hospital while still ensuring that those who need help receive it.

See KOBLER on Page 4



Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. public information officer Guillermo Lifoifoi walks the CNMI's media partners through a room at the COVID-19 Community Center that will serve as an "information station" and "education station."

JOSHUA SANTOS

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(FB Stories
(FB Swipe Up))

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Stories

PRINT

Call 670.235-NEWS (6397) to learn more opportunities.

Kilili says 384 claims for PUA, PFUC are still pending

» **As of Dec. 4, 2021, \$260.8M in PUA/ PFUC given to CNMI workers**

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie.delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) said over the weekend that there are still 384 claims for Pandemic Unemployment Assistance, and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation pending in the Marianas.

In his e-kilili newsletter, Sablan said the U.S. Labor Department had reported to the congressional office this week that a total of 16,788 applicants have already received assistance since the PUA and PFUC programs began in June 2020.

He said that, according to U.S. Labor, total aid to Marianas workers as of Dec. 4, 2021

is \$260,885,306—an average of \$15,540 per eligible applicant.

Last week, CNMI Labor Secretary Vicky Benavente disclosed that any unspent PUA and PFUC funds will be sent back to U.S. Labor. Benavente said the official closeout date of the PUA/FPUC program is



Sablan

June 2022, and any unspent funds under the program will be returned to U.S. Labor after.

Sablan said when the U.S. Congress created PUA and PFUC to supplement state unemployment systems, he was able to include a provision allowing the CNMI to participate, even though the Com-

monwealth has no unemployment insurance for workers.

Sablan said he also made clear in Public Law 116-260 that foreign workers, laid off because of COVID-19, were entitled to unemployment assistance.

He said this was Congress' original intention, but was initially overridden by the Trump administration.

The delegate said that after President Joe Biden came into office, together with Guam Delegate Michael San Nicolas and 11 other Democratic

colleagues, he asked for review of this Trump policy and Biden agreed.

He said the "Marianas (kk) expansion," as the Congressional Research Service now calls the Biden administration interpretation of a provision of the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, allowed any individual, who previously filed a PUA/PFUC claim and was denied for any week, to be able to self-certify eligibility under the updated eligibility criteria and receive unemployment aid retroactively.

Blue Ribbon Initiative Consortium plans next steps

The Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s Community Guidance Center, in collaboration with the CNMI Blue Ribbon Initiative Consortium, held their 7th consortium meeting on Nov. 29, 2021, at the Aqua Resort Club.

The consortium plans to conduct a Community Readiness Survey for the islands of Saipan, Rota, and Tinian. The results from this survey will provide board leadership with critical information on the status of the CNMI's capacity and planning course, and will guide the board on how to properly evaluate the consortium's progress to prevent and reduce substance use disorders and opioid use

disorders within the communities.

Additionally, the discussion of the consortium's next steps were shared, such as (1) the development of by-laws and policies; (2) plans to identify and apply for both local and federal resources to sustain the consortium; (3) develop an annual calendar outlining meeting dates, events, and other relevant information; (4) identify major roles and responsibilities within the sub-committees; and (5) continue to address gaps in access to care, such as the lack of Medication Assisted Treatment in the CNMI.

An election was also held

to elect the consortium's chairperson and vice chairperson. Dr. Tai Doram from the Behavioral Health Planning Council was unanimously elected as chairman, while Donna Krum, family member/advocate from Al-Anon, was unanimously elected as vice chairwoman.

To achieve its goals, stakeholders were able to select subcommittees that would help the consortium move forward, each focusing on workforce, planning, prevention, treatment, and recovery.

The consortium also coordinated training/presentations for its peers. Participants underwent customer service training with Jim Arenovski of

Island Training Solutions, and a budget management presentation by Joanne H. Aldan

and Audrey Flores-Albuen of Bank of Hawaii.

For more information re-

garding the consortium meetings, contact CGC at (670) 323-6560/1. (PR)



Wilma Villanueva, president of Haggan/Woong United For Recovery, gives her welcoming remarks at the CNMI Blue Ribbon Initiative's 7th consortium meeting on Nov. 29, 2021, at the Aqua Resort Club. CHCC



NORTHERN MARIANAS TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

P.O. Box 504880 Saipan MP 96950
Tel. No.: (670) 323.6601
Procurement Office

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL

RFP-NMTI/2022-001

Northern Marianas Technical Institute Workforce Career Training Facility

The Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands (CNMI) is soliciting proposals from qualified consulting firms to provide professional services for the design and construction management (CM) for the Northern Marianas Technical Institute Workforce Career Training Facility (NMTI) on the island of Saipan. The Facility will be located in Koblerville, Saipan as indicated on the attached Site Plan (Attachment A). This project is being funded by a grant from the US Department of Commerce, Economic Development Administration.

This solicitation is in accordance with CNMI Procurement Regulations NMIAIC § 70-30.3-305. To also include provisions of CNMI Procurement Regulations, NMIAIC Section §70-30.3-725 prohibiting kickbacks and gratuities, NMIAIC Section §70-30.3-730 prohibition against contingent fees shall apply.

All firms submitting their RFPs may be considered as a Registered A&E firm with the CNMI pursuant to NMIAIC § 70-30.3-250.

All firms must have or obtain a valid Certificate of Authorization (COA) from the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Board of Professional Licensing. Information in obtaining a COA may be requested from the CNMI Board of Professional Licensing.

A pre-proposal meeting will be held on December 28, 2021, at 10:00 a.m. via Zoom Video Communication. Interested firms will be provided the video teleconference link. Firms are requested to submit a notice of their intent to participate in the pre-proposal meeting one (1) day before the meeting via email at: admin@nmtechcnmi.org. Attendance is not mandatory, but is recommended.

Inquiries regarding this RFP must be submitted in writing on or before December 21, 2021, no later than 9:00 a.m. via email to Ms. Jodina Attao, CEO at: admin@nmtechcnmi.org.

Sealed proposals for this project shall be submitted with one (1) original and four (4) copies to the NMTI Procurement Officer located at the NMTI campus, Lowerbase, Saipan, MP-96950 no later than **4:00pm, local time, Chamorro Standard Time, 01/18/2022, and must be marked "Proposal - Northern Marianas Technical Institute Workforce Career Training Facility NMNTI-2022/RFP-001."** Questions regarding this solicitation should be directed to Ms. Jodina Attao, by email only at admin@nmtechcnmi.org. Electronic submissions may be accepted if approved prior to the submission deadline.

Proposals located outside of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their proposal by submitting a Notice of Intent to propose. Notice of Intent to Propose must be received by the **NMTI Procurement Office no later than 4:00pm local time, 01/25/2022, via email to amy.babauta@nmtechcnmi.org.**

For proposers located outside of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands an original and three (3) copies of sealed proposal must be postmarked by the US Postal Services of the official government postal service of foreign country **no later than 01/25/2022, and mailed to NMTI Procurement Officer at PO Box 504880 Saipan, MP 96950 and the proposal must be received no later than 02/04/2022.** Electronic submissions may be accepted if approved prior to the submission deadline.

The Project Description and Scope of Work is available beginning December 14, 2021 at the NMTI Procurement Office, located at the NMTI Main Office, Lower Base. Request may be sent via email to Ms. Amy Lynn Babauta at amy.babauta@nmtechcnmi.org..

/s/ Jodina C. Attao
CEO

/s/ Amy Lynn Babauta
Procurement Officer



Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

INVITATION FOR BIDS CUC-IFB-22-001

KOBLERVILLE SEWERLINE EXTENSION PROJECT

The Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Utilities Corporation (CUC) is soliciting competitive sealed bids from qualified firms for the Koblerville Sewerline Extension Project in Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. The project consists of the installation of gravity sewer main, new service laterals, connection to existing service laterals, and the installation of sewer manholes.

The project is funded by a grant from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA) and CUC. The award of this project is contingent upon receipt of approval for project award from USEPA.

CUC requires the project to be completed in **300 calendar days** from date of award of contract.

Prospective Bidders for this IFB must pre-register with the CUC Procurement & Supply Division. The IFB package may be obtained from the CUC Procurement and Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, Saipan, between 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday, except on government observed holidays upon completion of registration and presentation of a receipt evidencing a non-refundable payment to the CUC Treasury Section, by cash, check or credit card in the amount of \$200.00 for one IFB package set.

One (1) original and Five (5) copies of the bid MUST be submitted in a sealed envelope marked "CUC-IFB-22-001, Koblerville Sewer Line Extension Project" to the CUC Procurement & Supply Office, 3rd Floor, Room No. 3, Joeten Dandan Commercial Building, P.O. Box 501220, Saipan, MP 96950, no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on January 11, 2022**, at which time they will be publicly opened and read aloud. Bids mailed via postal or courier service must be received on or before due date and time or post-marked before due date and time. Bid shall be submitted on the provided Bid Forms. Bidders are required to complete all Bid Forms. Bidders may supplement this form as appropriate. Bids will be required to be submitted under a condition of irrevocability for a period of 60 days after submission. **Late submissions and conditional bids will not be considered.**

A Bid Guarantee of **fifteen percent (15%)** of the total bid price must accompany the bids. The bid guarantee may be in cash, certified check, cashier's check, or bid bond executed by a surety company holding a certificate of authority from the United States Secretary of Treasury as an acceptable surety. A Performance Bond of **one hundred percent (100%)** of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC. A Payment Bond of **one hundred percent (100%)** of the total proposal price will be required upon the execution of the contract by the successful bidders. Surety Company must be authorized to do business in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands or otherwise secured in a manner satisfactory to CUC, for the protection of all persons supplying labor and material to the contractor or its subcontractors for the performance of the work provided for in the contract.

All insurers' questions, concerns and qualification should be handled by the Department of Commerce Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC). The OIC is tasked with regulating and monitoring compliance to the CNMI's Insurance Code (Title 4, Division 7). **Bidders are required to submit a clearance from the OIC certifying their insurer of choice is in compliance with the CNMI's Insurance Code.**

All bidders are advised that CUC assumes no responsibility in any act of omission on the part of the bidders due to lack of information or understanding of the bid requirements in the course of Contractor's preparation of a bid under the contract. Bidders are required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations.

This Invitation for Bids does not commit CUC to the award of a contract or contracts, nor to pay any cost incurred in the preparation and submission of bids in anticipation of a contract. The award of a contract may be contingent upon the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission's (CPUC) approval. If CPUC approval is required, the contract will not be executed by CUC until such approval is provided. This bid and the ensuing contract shall be executed pursuant to the CUC Procurement Regulations. The contractor shall be required to comply with all CNMI and applicable Federal Laws.

Questions or requests for clarification will be entertained only from pre-registered bidders and must be submitted in writing no later than **10:00 AM (ChST) on December 30, 2021** to Mr. Manny B. Sablan, Jr., CUC's Procurement & Supply, Purchasing Administrator, via email address manny.sablan@cucgov.org, with a copy to Larry Manacop, Acting Chief Engineer for Water/Wastewater via email at larry.manacop@cucgov.org, Joel Puyat, Engineer via email at joel.puyat@cucgov.org and Ms. Christie L. Sablan, Procurement & Supply, Senior, Administrative Technician via email address christie.sablan@cucgov.org.

CUC reserves the right to reject any or all bids for any reason and waive any defects in said bid proposal, if in its sole opinion, to do so would be in the best interest of CUC. All bids shall become the property of CUC.

GARY P. CAMACHO
Executive Director

MANNY B. SABLAN
Purchasing Administrator

Woman in 'ice' case gets two-year imprisonment

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The U.S. District Court for the NMI has sentenced a woman to two years in prison for her involvement in the distribution of over five grams of

methamphetamine or "ice."

Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona sentenced Rose Mary Cepeda Ilo yesterday to 24 months in prison, or two-years. Upon her release, Ilo will be subject to four years of supervised release.

Ilo was given the chance to reduce her probation period as long as she complies with all the courts' conditions. "If, after serving sentence, defendant is compliant with all conditions, one year of the term of supervised release will be reduced.

House did not act on Senate resolution to approve Torres' request for \$500 bonuses for gov't retirees

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The House of Representatives has held off acting on Senate Joint Resolution 22-05 that would have given CNMI government retirees \$500 bonuses this holiday season.

For now, House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) would like to keep Senate Joint Resolution 22-05 on the agenda for further review.

Villagomez made the decision after vice speaker Blas Jonathan T. Attao (R-Saipan) raised some issues about the resolution in yesterday's session and underscored the need for more information from the Department of Finance and the administration.

Last week, nine senators unanimously approved SJR 22-05 that approved Torres' request to repro-

gram \$1.3 million from the general fund for the payment of the retirees' \$500 bonuses.

Senate President Jude U. Hofsneider, who authored the resolution, said they agreed with the importance of expeditiously entertaining Torres' request in support of the retirees.

Attao extended appreciation to the Senate for acting on this legislation, but pointed out that any distribution of funds should begin in the House and failure to do that on anything that has to do with revenues that's moving from the Senate is deemed illegal under the CNMI Constitution.

"It's the authority of the House to move those funds," Attao said.

In addition, he said that Torres' letter to Villagomez and Hofsneider had reflected that specific accounts be utilized, which is the discretionary account for the governor, lieutenant

governor and other accounts within the Department of Finance shall be reprogrammed.

"Unfortunately, those documents were not provided to us," he said.

Attao said the governor's letter says that they will be supplanting or backfilling the accounts through the American Rescue Plan Act funds.

He said they all know that under ARPA, they cannot use any of the funds to address pensions, which in this case is being viewed as \$500 bonus to the pensions that the retirees are receiving. "This body is not against assisting the retirees. It's been very clear that this body has introduced multiple legislations in support of our retirees," Attao said.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

coming out soon.

Villagomez made the announcement shortly after Babauta, who chairs the House Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee, introduced House Resolution 22-14, impeaching Torres for alleged commission of felonies, corruption, and neglect of duty in violation of Article 3, Section 19 of the CNMI Constitution.

Reading from a prepared statement, Vaiagae said her thoughts are about fairness and equity. She said she has witnessed the JGO Committee's proceedings and now that the articles of impeachment are before the full House, she is compelled to ask the members to ask a fair question: If the JGO members will amend the articles of impeachment to include previous governors and lieutenant gov-

ernors who have done the same as what are being alleged against Torres.

"If it's true that Lt. Gov. [Arnold] Palacios—as other lieutenant governors may have done—signed the travel authorization for Gov. Torres, shouldn't he too, Lt. Gov. Arnold Palacios, be held in violation for approving that TA? Or is it just Ralph DLG Torres?" she asked.

Also, now that the articles of impeachment are before the full House, will the representatives amend it to include the removal of sitting representatives who have criminal and ethical charges against them?, Vaiagae asked.

A longer version of this story is available at www.saipantribune.com

and assured that the CNMI has the tools to help individuals recover.

"We continue to urge individuals to please try to get vaccinated [and] get boosters especially if you're due for it. We have the tools to help you recover from this; we want people to start thinking about living safely with COVID," she said.

Of the 47 newest cases, 11 were identified on Dec. 17 and 36 on Dec. 18. By identification method, 34 were found through contact tracing and 13 were found through community testing. The individuals have since been isolated and are being actively monitored, and the vaccination statuses of the 47 were pending verification as of Sunday night, said CHCC.

As of Dec. 19, there are 12 who are hospitalized right now as a result of COVID-19, two of them on ventilators. By vaccination status, seven are unvaccinated and five unvaccinated. Four patients have

already been discharged.

CHCC also reported that, as of Dec. 18, there have been 1,386 recoveries made, 740 active cases, and five COVID-19-related deaths since Oct. 28.

CHCC also reported that a total of 797 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on Dec. 18, bringing the CNMI's vaccination rate to 91.3%. As of yesterday, that count now stood at 91.7%. Registering for COVID-19 vaccines can be done at www.vaccinatecnmi.com. CHCC added that there were no vaccination operations on Dec. 19.

CHCC reported that a total of 293 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Dec. 18, comprising travel and surveillance testing but not including testing numbers from the Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services' antigen COVID-19 testing. Registering for community-based testing can be done at <https://covidtesting.chcc.health/>.

Accordingly, pursuant to 18 U.S.C. § 3583, the mandatory conditions are to be imposed immediately following her release from imprisonment," Manglona said.

The court also ordered Ilo to perform 100 hours of community service after her imprisonment in lieu of a fine and at the direction of the U.S. Probation Office. This, however, shall be suspended if Ilo finds a full-time job later.

Ilo was allowed to remain out until the U.S. Marshal Service calls her with a reporting date and time on

where and when she will serve her sentence.

Although the court waived the fines that were to be imposed on Ilo, Manglona still ordered her to pay a \$100 special assessment fee, which is "to be paid immediately after sentencing."

According to the indictment, between March 31, 2020 and/or about May 7, 2020, Ilo conspired with other persons to possess with the intent to distribute over five grams of ice, a Schedule II controlled substance.

also caught the COVID-19 virus.

"So they're running on not even skeleton crew right now. They're really scratching the ground right now in regards to manpower," he said.

Attao said a lot of Corrections officers are able to go home for a couple of hours, but have to report back to DOC as soon as possible because of the severe manpower shortage that they have.

He said the proper House committee should look into this issue and look at the opportunity if there's financial assistance that could be extended to DOC or possibly request additional money via the \$500 that is being entertained for the retirees' bonuses. He suggested to have some sort of an emergency hiring for the DOC, to assist them in their situation right now.

"We have to provide those services. They have a grant that they have to abide by and, with the shortage of manpower, I don't know if we're going to be able to even live up to the grant expectations because of the lack of manpower that they're facing over there," Attao said.

contact to a COVID-positive person can learn more about next steps.

Lifoifoi said the area is also being set up to be a place to pick up printouts of COVID-19 test results, and CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña added that COVID-positive individuals will not be allowed to enter this area of the center.

In an interview at the end of the tour, Muña said the center is meant to augment, and not replace, any ongoing efforts. She added that the COVID-19 tests conducted at the center are for confirmatory purposes, and CHCC still asks individuals to get tested through community-based testing and/or through the Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services' antigen testing.

Muña said the Emergency Room at CHCC's hospital of late had been receiving many individuals who were seeking further information and wanting a confirmatory COVID-19 test to ensure that they can return to work. The center fulfills these needs, but Muña again emphasizes that individuals should get tested through DFEMS or CBT.

"This is really just confirmatory. We still want you to use DFEMS, we want you to use the CBT, but this is a place where you can get information rather than waiting at home [and] trying to decide what to do. This is a place where you can...come up and get information from us so that we can provide it for you," she said.

VAIAGAE

From Page 1

one case, against animals.

Speaking during the public comment portion of the House of Representatives session yesterday, Vaiagae, who is counselor for abused women, did not name the three representatives, but she was apparently referring to Democrat Reps. Edwin K. Propst, Vicente Camacho, and Celina R. Babauta.

This developed as House Speaker Edmund S. Villagomez (Ind-Saipan) announced at yesterday's session that he will be creating a special committee on impeachment, that he will be appointing members to the committee and that a memorandum will be

DEATH

From Page 1

screening. The remaining 282 were identified from travel testing.

Sunday's news release from the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. did not provide more details about the latest COVID-19-related fatality but said more details will be provided later.

CHCC chief executive officer Esther L. Muña offered her condolences yesterday, saying that losing a loved one is always sad but is "really heartbreaking" as the holidays near. Muña said she and CHCC will provide as much resources and help to the families during this time while also allowing them "room to breathe."

She urged the community to get vaccinated against COVID-19 and to receive boosters if due for one,

and assured that the CNMI has the tools to help individuals recover.

"We continue to urge individuals to please try to get vaccinated [and] get boosters especially if you're due for it. We have the tools to help you recover from this; we want people to start thinking about living safely with COVID," she said.

Of the 47 newest cases, 11 were identified on Dec. 17 and 36 on Dec. 18. By identification method, 34 were found through contact tracing and 13 were found through community testing. The individuals have since been isolated and are being actively monitored, and the vaccination statuses of the 47 were pending verification as of Sunday night, said CHCC.

As of Dec. 19, there are 12 who are hospitalized right now as a result of COVID-19, two of them on ventilators. By vaccination status, seven are unvaccinated and five unvaccinated. Four patients have

already been discharged.

CHCC also reported that, as of

Dec. 18, there have been 1,386 recoveries made, 740 active cases, and five COVID-19-related deaths since Oct. 28.

CHCC also reported that a total of 797 COVID-19 vaccine shots were administered on Dec. 18, bringing the CNMI's vaccination rate to 91.3%. As of yesterday, that count now stood at 91.7%. Registering for COVID-19 vaccines can be done at www.vaccinatecnmi.com. CHCC added that there were no vaccination operations on Dec. 19.

CHCC reported that a total of 293 COVID-19 tests were conducted on Dec. 18, comprising travel and surveillance testing but not including testing numbers from the Department of Fire & Emergency Medical Services' antigen COVID-19 testing. Registering for community-based testing can be done at <https://covidtesting.chcc.health/>.

KOBLER

From Page 2

"It's great that we can capture the positive cases and be able to direct them to their next line of care, and the monoclonal antibodies are to also help reduce any pressure on the [emergency room] and on the [hospital's intensive care unit]," she said.

Also present at the site is community disease investigation inspector III Dwayne Davis, explaining yesterday how COVID-19 tests are processed at the center and next steps for individuals after getting their test results.

Davis said that an area of the center is dedicated to the handling and processing of COVID-19 tests and that test results come out within 15 minutes. The test results are then passed over to members of CHCC's contact tracing team, who are also at the center.

Individuals will then receive educational materials from the contact tracing team. If you test negative, Davis said that you will be directed to a part of the center where you can pick up proof of a negative test result. If you test positive, you will receive material on the next steps.

CHCC public information officer Guillermo Lifoifoi walked the CNMI's media partners through a room at the center that will be used as an "information station" and "education station," where those with questions and concerns about quarantining and what to do if you were a close

CPA in process of applying for federal subsidy

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has taken the first step in applying for federal subsidy under the Department of Transportation's Small Community Air Service Development Program, which could provide funding to CPA for air carrier revenue guarantees, marketing programs, and other support for improving service for Rota and Tinian.

In response to Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan's assurance that he would back CPA if it decides to apply for the program, CPA chair Kimberly King-Hinds informed the congressman that CPA is currently preparing its application for the grant.

"In regard to the Small Community Air Service Development Program, CPA is in the process of preparing its grant application, and that application will be shared with you once it is completed. We look forward to incorporating your valuable input," she said.

The CPA chair said federal subsidy through various programs offered by the U.S. Department of Transportation like the SCASDP would establish affordable and reliable interisland air travel by subsi-

dizing commuter and certified air carriers to serve the Rota and Tinian airports.

She added that being granted this federal subsidy would be the only long-term solution to its current dispute with the CNMI's sole interisland air service provider, Star Marianas Airlines inc.

In a previous article on the *Saipan Tribune*, following the recent suspension of flights by Star Marianas due to a fee assessment dispute, CPA reached out to the U.S. DOT, requesting it extend the eligibility for federal subsidy under their many programs.

In response to King-Hinds' letter to the U.S. DOT, Sablan recommended that CPA apply for SCASDP and should they

do so, he would back their application with the U.S. DOT.

"Upon receipt of your letter with your request that I kick-start federal assistance, congressional staff contacted the Department of Transportation and confirmed the Commonwealth has never submitted SCASDP applications for any of the three airports operated by CPA, even though you mention the program in your letter as having the potential to improve air service and lower costs for Rota and Tinian. So, I respectfully recommend that you apply for these federal funds and share your application with me, so I can offer my support to the Department of Transportation," he had said.

Free webinar on federal contracting

The Guam Procurement Technical Assistance Center is offering free live webinars on federal contracting. Webinars run from 10am to 11:30am and will be conducted via Zoom. Links to the live webinar and the webinar

evaluation will be emailed to all registered attendees 15 minutes before the start of the webinar.

■ Dec. 23, 2021-FAR Clauses Explained-Confused by all the FAR clauses ref-

ered in government solicitations? The Guam PTAC will demystify these Federal Acquisition Regulations. Join us as we explain many of the common FAR clauses found in Federal solicitations.

■ Dec. 30, 2021-Government of Guam Procurement-

The Guam PTAC will explain

Government of Guam Procurement, where to find opportunities, and how to submit bids.

To register visit www.guamptac.com. (PR)

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-032

Opening Date: December 15, 2021
Closing Date: December 29, 2021

POSITION TITLE:
DEPARTMENT:
LOCATION:
ANNUAL SALARY:
CONTRACT:
POSITION(S):

Fiscal Technician
COA/Customer Service/Call Center
Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
\$20,826.00 - \$28,115.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
Not Contracted
One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Chief of Administration or his/her designee.

Duties:

- May supervise staff to include: prioritizing and assigning work; conducting performance evaluations; ensuring staff is trained; ensuring that employees follow policies and procedures; maintaining a healthy and safe working environment; and, making hiring, termination, and disciplinary recommendations.
- Receives and processes customer payments; screens and verifies check receipts; updates customer accounts; reviews customer account status for partial payment receipts; computes payment information; and issues payment slips.
- May provide field utility meter inspection, testing, investigation, repairs and service documentation.
- Enters and verifies account changes and correction transactions; researches, reconciles and compiles adjustment documentation; prepares billing adjustments; and/or documents customer account status.
- Balances cash and other payment receipts and prepares bank deposits; balances credit card receipts with merchant settlement records; prepares sales deposits; processes customer refund payments; may process and file payroll documents.
- Receives and responds to customer calls and inquiries; reviews account and payment information; explains customer billing regarding charge disputes; assists customers with new accounts, required documentation and application processing; processes work orders as required; and refers inquiries to appropriate resource.
- Organizes and files revenue receipts, change vouchers, and related reports; maintains filing system; and prepares listings, schedules and activity reports.
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS and 4 years of utility accounts or fiscal support experience.

Knowledge of: Applicable Federal, Commonwealth and local laws, codes, regulations and/or ordinances; Supervisory principles, practices and techniques (based on assignment); Cash handling practices (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Basic mathematical principles; Recordkeeping principles; Safety principles and safe work practices; Applicable equipment used in field utility services (based on assignment); Modern office technology.

Skills in: Interpreting and applying applicable laws, codes, regulations and standards; Supervising, monitoring, training and evaluating staff (based on assignment); Receiving, posting and reconciling payments, cash receipts or account information; Verifying and updating account or utility meter information; Providing customer service and responding to inquiries; Coordinating services with other departments or resources; Inspecting and operating field equipment related to utility usage and testing (based on assignment); Performing basic mathematical calculations; Researching, reconciling and preparing account adjustments and related documentation; Preparing and maintaining files, forms, reports and records; Copying and scanning documents; Updating, maintaining and preparing reports and spreadsheet tracking documents; Researching account information and providing information regarding billing disputes; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

Licensing: Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131

CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-033

Opening Date: December 9, 2021

Closing Date: December 22, 2021

POSITION TITLE:
DEPARTMENT:
LOCATION:
ANNUAL SALARY:
CONTRACT:
POSITION(S):

Trades Assistant, Operator
Power Generation Division
Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
\$16,742.00 - \$22,602.00 per annum, Non - Exempt
Not Contracted
One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Power Generation Manager or his/her designee.

Duties:

- The Trades Assistant-Operator assists with the safe and efficient operation of all plant equipment and machinery including, but not limited to, incinerators, generators, operation of valves, plant production operations, and unloading of diesel fuel tank trucks to storage tanks.
- Follows all safety and operations procedures during operations and maintenance activities;
- Monitoring Plant systems as assigned;
- Prepares job site for work including gathering and setting up materials and supplies, and setting work safety barriers for protection;
- Gathers, cleans and returns equipment, materials and supplies used;
- Cleans and maintains work site after project or repair work is complete;
- Monitors equipment; takes readings and collects data; documents equipment readings; prepares and submits data and work reports;
- Performs inventory spot checks to ensure adequate materials and supplies are available for daily work activities;
- Assisting with equipment inspections, cleaning, corrosion control, and painting;
- Operating incinerators; oil and water separator pump, servicing and preparing oil filters;
- Maintaining grounds, trimming trees and removing debris and housekeeping;
- Performs other duties of a similar nature and level as assigned.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS. Training and knowledge in operations repair, and maintenance of power generating and/or industrial equipment/facilities desired but not required.

Knowledge of: Customer service principles; Basic mathematical concepts; Safety procedures and safe work practices; Modern office technology.

Skills in: Operating heavy and light equipment machinery, hand and power tools required of assigned area; Adhering to safety procedures and safe work practices; Prioritizing tasks and managing time for efficiency; Identifying issues and solving problems; Providing attention to detail; Taking equipment readings and recording data; Maintaining activity logs and reports; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction. Must Able to lift and carry heavy objects of 45 pounds and over, climb ladders, reach above the shoulders, stand, sit, crawl and kneel for prolonged periods and perform repeated bending. Recognize color codes, operate cranes and motor vehicles. Work inside around machinery in operation; in varying degree of temperature in tight or cramped (confined) work spaces, at heights, on ladders or scaffolds, and on slippery or uneven walking surfaces in close proximity to high and low voltage circuits and climbs stairs frequently. Occasionally use solvents, de-greasing agents, or other chemical agents, and be assigned to protracted or irregular hours of work. Work in environments exposed to dust, oil, grease, constant or excessive noise, vibration, and smoke and gas fumes. Work closely with others and/or alone depending on assigned daily activities.

Licensing:

o Valid CNMI Driver's License with appropriate class.

Must be available to work a 24/7 rotation shift to include weekends and holidays, may be on call for emergency response.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, from Monday to Friday (Except Legal Holidays), 7:30 am – 4:30 pm. Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

P. O. Box 501220, Third Floor, Joeten Dandan Building, Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 664-4282 • Fax: (670) 235-5131

CUC is an Equal Opportunity Provider and Employer.

Commonwealth Utilities Corporation

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

JVA No. 22-034

Opening Date: December 9, 2021

Closing Date: December 22, 2021

POSITION TITLE:
DEPARTMENT:
LOCATION:
ANNUAL SALARY:
CONTRACT:
POSITION(S):

Fiscal Assistant
COA/Customer Service/Call Center
Saipan, Northern Marianas Islands, USA
\$16,742.00 - \$22,602.00 per annum, Non-Exempt
Not Contracted
One (1)

The incumbent will be under the direct supervision of the Chief of Administration or his/her designee.

Duties:

- Updates and verifies customer account or work order information; enters and balances payment data; prepares timekeeping records; may work in the field obtaining and entering customer utility meter information, and replacing or disconnecting utility meters and services.
- Receives customer payments; balances and records cash and other payment receipts; verifies receipts against payment system data; and prepares deposits.
- Monitors and updates customer account information; researches account discrepancies or unusual meter readings; calculates payment information for past-due accounts, new installations and security deposits; reports research findings; and/or follows up on service or work order status.
- Greets customers or receives calls; responds to customer inquiries such as account balance information, payment due dates, minimum payment amounts due or general information inquiries; refers customers to appropriate resources.
- Copies and scans documents; maintains and organizes files records, reports and accounting transaction documentation.
- Updates and maintains spreadsheet reports; prepares fiscal transaction reports or other work activity reports.

Minimum Requirements:

Education: High School Diploma or GED or ABE Program AS.

Knowledge of: Cash handling practices (based on assignment); Customer service principles; Basic mathematical principles; Recordkeeping principles; Safety principles and safe work practices; Applicable equipment used in field utility services (based on assignment); Modern office technology.

Skills in: Receiving, posting and reconciling payments, cash receipts or account information; Verifying and updating account or utility meter information; Providing customer service and responding to inquiries; Coordinating services with other departments or resources; Inspecting and operating field equipment related to utility usage (based on assignment); Performing basic mathematical calculations; Researching account information or discrepancies; Preparing and maintaining files, forms, reports and records; Copying and scanning documents; Updating, maintaining and preparing reports and spreadsheet tracking documents; Utilizing a computer and relevant software applications; Utilizing communication and interpersonal skills as applied to interaction with coworkers, supervisor, the general public, and others to sufficiently exchange or convey information and to receive work direction.

All applicants may be tested and all applicants are subject to pre-employment drug test.

How to Apply: Submit a completed CUC Employment Application, resume, and applicable supporting documents to the CUC Human Resources office located on the 3rd Floor of the Joeten Dandan Building on Saipan, Monday through Friday 7:30 am – 4:30 pm (Except Legal Holidays). Applicants on the island of Tinian and Rota may submit their documents to their respective CUC Administration office. Application, resume and supporting documents can also be e-mailed to: employment.applications@cucgov.org

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U.S. Marines in uniform, Toys for Tots Bike Ride organizer and Marine veteran Dr. Dan Chase, and some of the CNMI's motorcycle riders share a photo at the Mobil gas station along Middle Road, the starting point for bikers before they went off on their Toys for Tots Bike Ride on Sunday.

COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

Toys for Tots Bike Ride draws strong support



A contingent of U.S. Marines receive the donated toys at the Hyatt Regency Saipan.

DAN CHASE

By JOSHUA SANTOS
joshua_santos@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Between 35 to 40 people took part in Sunday's Toys for Tots Bike Ride, with the big turnout coming from the CNMI's club-affiliated and independent motorcycle riders.

U.S. Marine veteran Dr. Dan Chase, who described the event as a success, said in a phone call Sunday that the number of participants fluctuated during the ride, with some joining or leaving the ride as it was underway.

Chase added that there was a change to the ride plans, with the starting and rendezvous point for bikers remaining the same but the ride now beginning at around noon and



Gov. Ralph DLG Torres and first lady Diann Torres join U.S. Marines in uniform, Toys for Tots Bike Ride organizer and Marine veteran Dr. Dan Chase at the Mobil gas station along Middle Road.

COMMONWEALTH BUREAU OF MILITARY AFFAIRS

the new dropoff point for the toys becoming Hyatt Regency Saipan at 2pm, where a contingent of U.S. Marines received the donated toys.

Saipan Tribune previously reported that the ride would begin at the Mobil gas station along Middle Road at 9am and end with a toy donation dropoff at the Marines Recruitment Office along Beach Road at around 11:30am.

As for how many toys were donated, Chase said it was "truckloads" and "boxes on boxes," with the CNMI's club-affiliated and non-affiliated riders stepping up for the Toys for Tots program.

After two months of planning and coordinating with the CNMI's bikers and other community partners, Chase said he was just happy to see everyone, non-riders included, come together to give back to children in need.

"Great turnout; a lot of people came out to support. ...A lot of people who don't even ride [motorcycles] came out to support, and that was amazing. ...Everybody just really came together for the sake of the kids. ...Everybody was very thankful for it, and they definitely want to start seeing this happen every year from now on," added Chase.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
Office of Procurement
Guma' Hustisi-Jiinwal Aweewe, House of Justice
P.O. Box 502165, Saipan, MP 96950
Phone: (670) 236-9791 | Email: procurement@nmijudiciary.com

FERMIN B. DELA CRUZ
Procurement Officer

**INVITATION FOR BIDS
NO. ITB-2022-JUD-2**

SUBMISSION DATE: JANUARY 20, 2022 (ChST)
SUBMIT VIA: THE CNMI GOVERNMENT'S VENDOR SELF SERVICE PORTAL
TIME: 10:00 A.M.

DECEMBER 21, 2021

**"VEHICLE PURCHASE
FOR MARSHALS SERVICE DIVISION"**

The Commonwealth Judicial Branch ("Judiciary") is accepting bids for the purchase and delivery of one (1) Police package SUV (white) from certified car dealers for the Marshals Service Division.

This project is supported, in whole or in part, by the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds, CNMI award number CNMI2004, awarded to the CNMI Judiciary by the CNMI Department of Finance.

A copy of the Invitation for Bids Package ("Package") is available on the CNMI Government's new Vendor portal, Vendor Self Service ("VSS"), at <https://selfservice.dof.gov.mp/vss/default.aspx>. You must register on the VSS to participate in this ITB. For registration instructions, please follow the link: <https://www.finance.gov.mp/division-forms/oit/cnmi-vss-registration-instructions.pdf>.

The Judiciary reserves the right to reject any or all proposals, or portions thereof, and waive immaterial defects if to do so would be in the best interest of the CNMI government.

The provisions of the NMI Judiciary Rules of Procurement Rule 69 prohibiting gratuities, kickbacks and contingent fees shall apply.

/s/ ALEXANDRO C. CASTRO
CHIEF JUSTICE

/s/ FERMIN B. DELA CRUZ
PROCUREMENT OFFICER

COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 | Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cnmiports.com

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT # 06-2021
Opening date: December 17, 2021 | Closing date: January 07, 2022

Positions:

SAIPAN:
(1) Baggage Handling Systems (BHS) Technician
(1) General Maintenance I
(1) Ports Police Officer I

ROTA:
(1) Maintenance/Custodial-I (CPA Rota)
(1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance I

TINIAN:
(1) General Maintenance I
(1) AOA Controller/Ground Maintenance

Employment Application must be accompanied with a copy of all required diploma/certificates and/or official sealed transcripts, original copy of recent police record not more than six (6) months old, original copy of U.S. Department of Defense Form DD214 for retired members or veterans of our Armed Forces, and other documents as required for the position. Public Law 11-70 requires that all male applicants age 18 to 25 years old must submit documentation evidencing his registration with the Federal Selective Service System. All applications and required documents must be submitted to the **CPA Administration Office, 2nd Floor Arrival Building, Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport or CPA Administration Office Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport**. Failure to provide any of the required documents will result in automatic disqualification. Certain vacancies may require written and/or physical test. Selected applicants will be subjected to pre-employment drug screening, 10-year Criminal History Record Check and 49 CFR Part 1542.209(d) Requirements. CPA reserves the right to waive or implement other qualifications to meet its needs. The deadline for submission of applications and required documents to the CPA Administration Office (Saipan) or at the Tinian International Airport or Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport is no later than **5:00 P.M. on Friday, January 7, 2022**.

Detailed information on qualifications and position descriptions for the above positions may be picked up along with the application form from Monday-Friday, 8:00 A.M. to 5:00 P.M., except on holidays, at the CPA Administration Office (2nd Floor) of the Francisco C. Ada/Saipan International Airport, Arrival Terminal or CPA Admin. Office at the Tinian International Airport or at the Benjamin Taisacan Manglona International Airport. For additional information, please contact the CPA Human Resources Office by email at lorna.tenorio@cnmiports.com or by phone at (670)237-6500.

CPA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and CPA hires those who are legally entitled to employment in the CNMI.

CHRISTOPHER S. TENORIO
Executive Director

COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
1 Lower Navy Hill Road Navy Hill, Saipan, MP 96950

PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY

INVITATION TO BID (ITB)
ITB22-CHCC/EHDP/ELC-CDI-007

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: DECEMBER 27, 2021 TIME: 10:00AM (CHST)

"LEASE OF VEHICLES"

INTERESTED PARTIES CAN DOWNLOAD THIS INVITATION TO BID FROM THE CHCC WEBSITE [www.chcc.gov.mp]. ONCE AT THE SITE, NAVIGATE TO **REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS** TAB ON THE LEFT NAVIGATION BAR, CLICK ON THE URL FOR THIS RFP. YOU WILL BE REQUIRED TO ENTER DATA TO ALLOW US TO TRACK ALL REQUESTS FOR THIS OPPORTUNITY.

THE CHCC RESERVES THE RIGHT TO REJECT ANY AND ALL PROPOSAL AND TO WAIVE ANY IMPERFECTIONS IN ANY PROPOSAL, IF TO DO SO SHALL BE IN THE INTEREST OF THE CHCC. ALL PROPOSALS SHALL BECOME THE EXCLUSIVE PROPERTY OF THE COMMONWEALTH HEALTHCARE CORPORATION.

/s/ ESTHER L. MUNA
CHCC CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

/s/ CORA P. ADA
DIRECTOR OF PROCUREMENT & SUPPLY

CNMI sees over 4,000 TRIP passengers as of December

By KIMBERLY B. ESMORES
kimberly_esmores@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

As of last week, the CNMI has already seen nearly 5,000 travelers from South Korea who are participating in the Marianas Visitors Authority's Tourism Resumption Investment Program, or TRIP.

According to acting MVA managing director Judy Torres, from October to Dec. 16, a total of 4,834 South Koreans have visited the CNMI under the TRIP Program.



Torres

Breaking it down, Torres said the CNMI had a total of 1,983 tourists in October, 2,121 in November, and 730 TRIP participants from Dec. 1 to 16.

She noted that the CNMI did have a significant number of cancellations due to the spread of the omicron variant of the COVID-19 virus but the TRIP program has been relatively successful so far. She declined to provide specific numbers on the cancellations.

"We are seeing that the spread of the new omicron variant is causing a concerning number of booking cancellations, so the MVA board will need to revisit TRIP to evaluate what changes may be needed to continue to support the continued revival of tourism and job security for the community," she said.

Fortunately, despite the cancellations, the CNMI is heading down the right track in jump-starting tourism with a number of TRIP participants now opting to pay for their own lodging.

"On a positive note, we have been receiving some visitors who have been paying their own hotel accommodations since the hybrid-quarantine requirement under TRIP was lifted last month," she said.

Also, Torres said MVA will be reducing travel buck incentives from up to \$250-\$500/ person per island to just \$100/ person at a flat rate, which she

described as another step in the right direction in reviving the tourism industry.

"Travel Bucks, which can only be spent in the Marianas, are still necessary for the Marianas to remain competitive with competing destinations—like Guam—which are offering similar incentives but to the airlines. We plan to continue to provide PCR tests required for the passenger's return to Korea. I should note that prior to omicron, airline incentives have not been utilized for any flight in October and November," she said.

Moving forward, Torres said, MVA is looking at the continued success of the program now that it has been extended to January 2022.

"With the successful jump-start of the Marianas tourism economy through the TRIP program, the outlook for continued gains had been positive for the new year. This included the anticipated doubling of flights from South Korea to Saipan from three times weekly to six-time weekly beginning in early January," she said.

Join annual Christmas Bird Count on Dec. 27

The public is invited to join the Christmas Bird Count, an annual citizen-led bird census, which will take place on Saipan on Dec. 27.

This event is free and open to the public. All skill levels and ages are invited to participate.

Started in 1900 by the National Audubon Society, the Christmas Bird Count is the world's longest-running citizen science project. The CNMI Division of Fish and

Wildlife has organized local counts for over 25 years, typically tallying thousands of birds and 50-plus species.

Volunteers for the Saipan Count will meet at 5:45am at American Memorial Park to divide into teams for roadside and walking surveys. Teams will spread out to cover the island, finding and recording as many birds and bird species as possible. Bring binoculars if you have them, but it's okay if

you don't.

The Rota Count will happen Dec. 28 with more details to follow.

Individuals participating will be expected to follow COVID-19 safety measures, including the 3 W'sn (wear a face mask, wash your hands, watch your distance).

For more information, contact Emilie Kohler at 664-6032 or kohler.dfw@gmail.com. (PR)



WINNING ARTWORK

Artwork by Pacifica Insurance Underwriters, Inc's 8th Annual Pacifica Art Contest category 2 winner Isa Nishitani from Chacha Oceanview Middle School. This year's theme: "Stay Covid-19 free". For contest information, log on to www.pacificains.com/artcontestand follow Pacifica's Facebook and Instagram accounts. Artworks are on display at their office in Susupe for public viewing.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Suspected but unconfirmed COVID-19 case in Pohnpei

PALIKIR, Pohnpei—As of Dec. 18, 2021, there is a suspected though unconfirmed case of COVID-19 in Pohnpei State in the Federated States of Micronesia.

From the week of Dec. 6 to Dec. 12, 2021, an unusual spike in influenza-like illnesses triggered the medical and public health teams to expand their surveillance efforts, which led to a 19-year-old male testing positive for COVID-19 on Dec. 15, 2021. A subsequent test, however,

which occurred on Dec. 16, 2021, was negative; this latter information is consistent with a historical, recovered, and non-infectious case.

Though this specific case appeared non-infectious, the person under investigation is being monitored. The PUI does not have any known recent travel history, i.e. is not a repatriated person, and so while this may not be an active COVID-19 case, further investigation is both necessary and ongoing. As

of this release, it is unknown whether this was simply a false positive (which is not impossible), or if it could mean community spread of COVID-19.

The PUI and his close contacts are presently in home quarantine. Contact tracing and testing is being expanded throughout Pohnpei and the rest of the FSM. The persons at the PUI's workplace are also undergoing testing, which remains ongoing at the time of this release. (PR)

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PAROLE
P.O. BOX 502641, Saipan, MP 96950-2641
Tel: Nos.: (670) 664-3301 • FAX: (670) 664-3310
E-mail: nickreyes.bop@gmail.com

**TO ALL MEDIA SERVICES
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

MESSAGE: The Honorable Ralph Dlg. Torres, Governor and the Honorable Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Governor, through the CNMI Board of Parole office, and pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section II of the "Open Government Act of 1992", hereby give Official Notice that an **Executive Board Meeting** is scheduled for **January 14, 2022 (Friday)** beginning at **10:00 a.m.**, at the **Honorable Vicente T. Seman Building, Department of Correctional Facility**, located at Susupe, Saipan MP 96950. The Agenda is as follows:

Executive Meeting Agenda
Honorable Vicente T. Seman Building Department of Corrections Training Room, Susupe, Saipan MP 96950
January 14th 2022, 10:00am

I. Preliminary Matters
A. Call to order
B. Roll Call
C. Presence of Quorum

II. Consent Items
1. Adoption of Agenda
2. Adoption of Meeting Minutes
a. Parole Hearing/Clemency Hearing: July 13th – 16th, 2021
b. Exec. Meeting Min July 16th, 2021
c. Exec. Meeting Min August 23 & 24th, 2021

III. Old Business
a. Proposed Revisions of Regulations/Chapter 115
b. Salary Adjustment for Chief Parole Officer
c. Hiring/Job Opportunity for Parole Officer I, II, III
d. Reallocation of Current Administrative Assistant to Administrative Specialist I

IV. Miscellaneous
a. Schedule of next Parole Hearing
b. Schedule of next Executive Meeting

If deemed necessary, members of the Board of Parole may elect to vote in Executive Session to discuss any of the items listed above.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
BOARD OF PAROLE
P.O. BOX 502641, Saipan, MP 96950-2641
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**TO ALL MEDIA SERVICES
PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT**

MESSAGE: The Honorable Ralph Dlg. Torres, Governor and the Honorable Arnold I. Palacios, Lt. Governor, through the CNMI Board of Parole office, and pursuant to Public Law 8-41, Section II of the "Open Government Act of 1992", hereby give Official Notice that a **Parole Hearing** is scheduled for **January 12-13, 2022 (Wednesday-Thursday)**, beginning at **9:00 a.m.**, at the **Honorable Vicente T. Seman Building, Department of Correctional Facility**, located at Susupe, Saipan MP 96950. The Agenda is as follows:

CNMI Board of Parole Hearing Agenda

I. Preliminary Matters
1. Call to order
2. Roll Call
3. Presence of Quorum

II. Consent Items
1. Adoption of Agenda

III. Parole Hearing **BOP No.:** **Criminal Case No.:**
1. Clifford Jack Palacios 22-001 19-0115D
2. Eric William Rabauliman 22-002-RA 08-0220
3. Jesse James Camacho 22-003-RA 98-0175D.00-0250D/16-0225
4. Robert Shineachi 22-004 10-0019C
5. Francisco Pua 22-005 05-0132D

IV. Adjournment

If deemed necessary, members of the Board of Parole may elect to vote in Executive Session to discuss any of the items listed below.

If you have any question or need additional information, please contact the Board of Parole Office at Telephone numbers: 664-3300

/s/ Ramon B. Camacho
BOP Chairman

Date: December 20, 2021

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
HEALTH CARE PROFESSIONS LICENSING BOARD
P.O. Box 502078, Bldg., 1242 Pohnpei Court
Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950
Tel No.: (670) 664-4809 Fax: (670) 664-4814
Email: cnmibpl@cnmibpl-hcplb.net
Website: cnmibpl-hcplb.net

Pursuant to P.L. 8-41, Section 11, Governor Ralph Dlg. Torres and Lt. Governor Arnold I. Palacios, through the Health Care Professions Licensing Board (HCPLB) are hereby giving notice that it will hold its regular monthly board meeting on **Wednesday, December 22, 2021, at 8am** on Saipan. The meeting will be held at the Administration Building, Governor's Conference Room on Capitol Hill.

AGENDA

I. Meeting Call to Order
II. Determination of Quorum
III. Review and Adoption of Agenda
IV. Review and Adoption of Minutes (11/17/2021)
V. Public Comments
VI. Chairperson's Report
A. Letter from Board Member Dr. Warren Creed
VII. Director's Report
A. Consumer Complaint – Ms. Christina K. I
B. American Association of State Counseling board (AASC)
C. 2022 Upcoming National Councils Meeting
VIII. Investigator's Report
IX. Communications from the Governor's Office & Legislature
A. Governor's Office - MEMO: Closure of non-essential government offices
B. Legislature
X. Old Business
A. Proposed Amendments for Addiction Professional Regulations
B. Proposed Amendments for Psychology Regulations
XI. New Business
XII. Pending Applications for Board's Review
A. New Application
B. Renewal Applications
XIII. Miscellaneous Business
XIV. Executive Session: The Board may vote to meet in executive session to consult with Counsel on pending or anticipated legal matters.
• Peter Geissler – Radiology Technology Applicant (Letter Update)
XV. Announcements
A. Next Meeting Date
B. Adjournment of Meeting

Opinion

Saipan Tribune

THE CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

Volume XXXI, Issue No. 252

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AP The Associated Press

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EDITORIAL

While ensuring safety, schools must stay open

All the emotions and fears that have followed the deadly shooting at Oxford High School are completely understandable. But the copycat threats that have thrived in the last two weeks are unacceptable and cannot be allowed to interfere with children's education.

That's what's happening though, as schools across Michigan have closed in response to these threats. School administrators, in conjunction with law enforcement, have to take any hint of violence seriously, but closing schools must be a last resort—especially for any length of time.

The focus should be on enhancing security and ensuring safety so students can feel confident in attending class. Whether that means more officers in buildings or stronger rules regarding backpacks and what students can bring into school, it's worth it.

Some students in Oakland County have sought to go virtual ahead of their holiday break, and have started a change.org petition demanding greater security measures and protections from their schools. As of Wednesday, more than 16,000 students had signed it.

"These widespread threats have induced fear and taken an emotional toll on all students, making in-person learning essentially useless," the petition states.

Again, we are empathetic to these concerns. Yet such continued interruptions to students' daily lives and their education are also worrisome. After the pandemic and state lockdowns disrupted two school years for many students, normalcy is an important goal.

Most of these threats are coming through social media and from fellow students. Law enforcement and prosecutors need to send a strong message that there is zero tolerance for these actions, and that those perpetrating the messages, regardless of age, will face swift punishment.

Earlier this month, state Superintendent Michael Rice said "an individual who threatens a school should be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law."

It's not cool or funny to cancel class or instill fear among classmates and teachers.

In Wayne County, more than two dozen have been charged with school threats or bringing weapons to school. Others have faced charges in Oakland and Macomb counties. Wayne County Prosecutor Kym Worthy has charged at least 25 youth and is investigating more.

This copycat phenomenon is maddening, but predictable. It happened in Michigan statewide, following the 2018 Parkland, Florida, shooting.

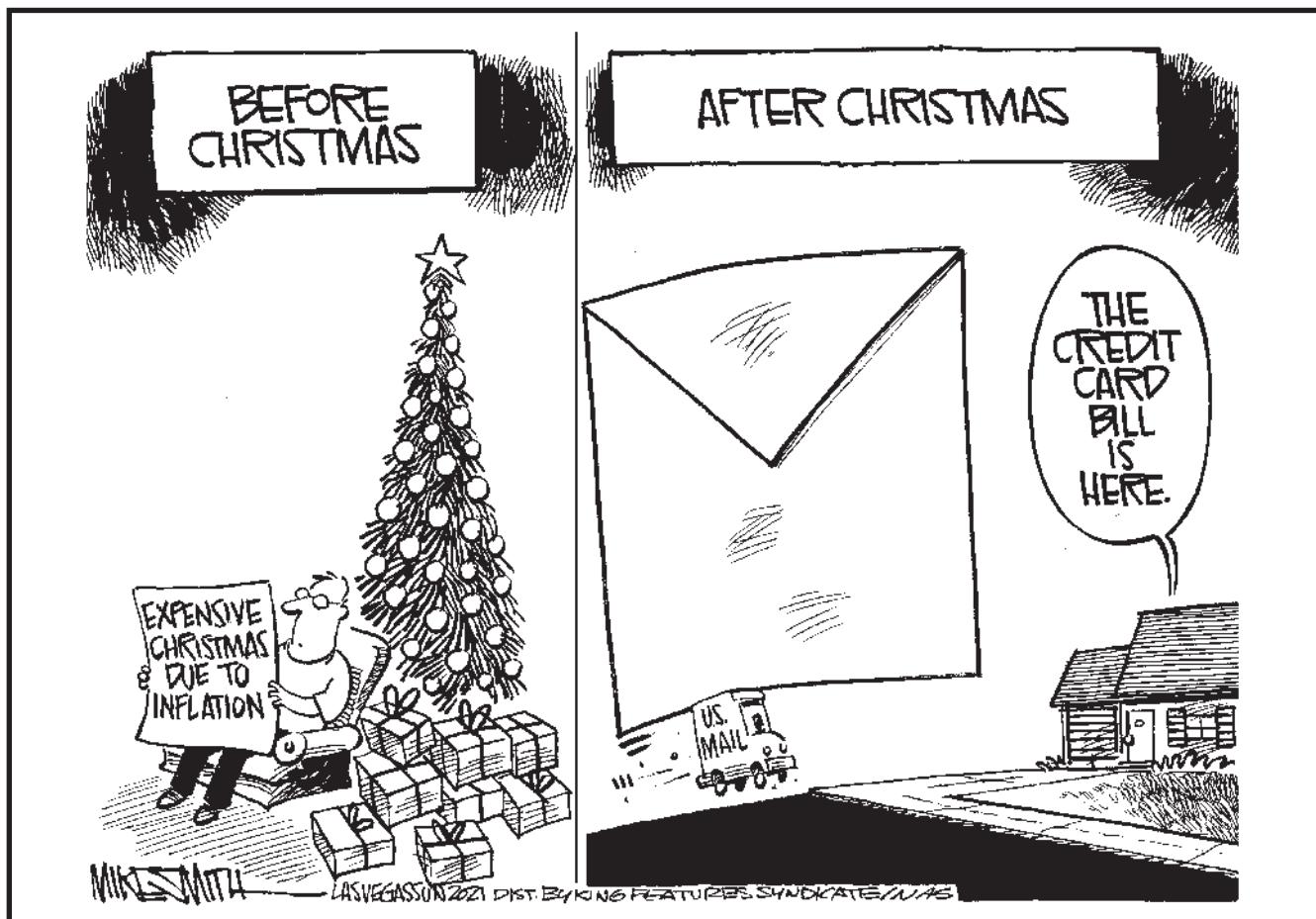
Oakland County Sheriff Michael Bouchard says his office is committed to investigating all threats, and says they can be charged "as a felony and domestic terrorism."

Consequences of those charges can follow young people throughout their lives, regardless of whether they thought they were only "making a joke."

Parents must address this with their children, and help stem the wave of threats.

For their part, schools should respond with appropriate safety measures and a commitment to keeping children in class.

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2021: The year of losing friends

Frank was everything I was not. White. Middle-aged. A father. Rich. Republican.

We somehow still hit it off years ago. He was a faithful reader of mine who agreed more often than not with my stories. I enjoyed his insights and wit.

I did something I rarely do with people I know only through the internet: I offered to meet in real life.

I treated Frank to lunch a couple of times; he bought my books. We learned about each other's families enough that we filled each other in on their developments and genuinely cared. My interactions with him, whether via private email or publicly on social media, were something I looked forward to and were almost daily.

We became ... if not full friends, then definitely friendly. Both of us reveled in the idea that we were a political Odd Couple in an era that doesn't look kindly on them. In fact, I sometimes defended Frank from people angry at his views and angry at me for even associating with someone like him—and he'd do the same.

I bragged to the unbelieving wokesters in my life that I had more than a few friendships with people like Frank. We maintained our ties because we had a deeper reason to talk, and years of doing so with few incidents other than vibrant—but never toxic—debates.

2021 destroyed all that.

Frank believed the coronavirus was real, but thought the reaction to it, medical and governmental, was overblown. I thought he was being too flippant and told him to get with the science. Our conversations on Twitter became more and more strained until I no longer looked forward to them.

Then one day, I decided to mute him. I became the very person I always slammed.

One irony: We had kept our back-and-forth throughout the Trump era, when many of my friends proclaimed they no longer wanted to talk to anyone who supported the then-president. I felt such sentiments childish and performative and transactional and just so American. If your relationships with others are so shallow that one disagreement gets between the two of you, I harumphed multiple times on Facebook, then we truly are doomed as a country.

But who could have anticipated 2021?

The triple-whammy of COVID-19, a vaccine to fight it, and the continued fallout from the Jan. 6 storming of the U.S. Capitol has frayed more friendships or outright destroyed them more than anything I've ever seen. Instead of trying to tolerate our differences or just agree to disagree with people we know, more of us just drop them altogether and dive deeper into our respective bubbles.

This phenomenon is more ruinous to us as a society than any policy the Trump administration hurled at us. We cannot grow

By **GUSTAVO ARELLANO**
Los Angeles Times



as individuals without loyal opposition challenging us, or as a society without considering the merits of the other side.

We're growing deaf due to the echo chamber that's social media. It allowed us to connect with more people than ever before—but also cheapened the idea of those very connections by making them as easy to sever as an unfollow or a block.

It wasn't supposed to be like this.

I still remember the rush of the early days of social media, when people I hadn't heard from in years or those I didn't know asked if they could "friend" me. The idea of keeping up with others and vice versa by just logging on was liberating, empowering. We didn't need long conversations to show others we cared; all we needed to do was click "like," maybe leave a pithy comment, and that was it.

We were friends. We were nothing.

When you talk to people regularly and in person, you can at least track the evolution of someone, and check them if they start to espouse nonsense. People change, after all. But the danger of social media is how it doesn't just lead people down rabbit holes; it jackhammers them deeper and deeper.

President Trump poured gas onto this truism; 2021 lit the fuse. It took Frank to make me realize this.

Soon after I muted him, I reviewed my Facebook account, which I now consider a platform to keep up with the life events of others (as opposed to Instagram, which is all about photos of food and pets, or Twitter, which is just one giant GIF war for me). I saw people whom I had become friends with over a decade ago post conspiracy theories about COVID-19, or rail against liberals and the media. I unfriended them, then wondered why I had never interacted with them all these years later—weren't we friends, after all?

I then looked up people who I knew were friends of mine at one point in real life—like, say, high school—and whom I had kept in touch with over the years. Without me noticing, some had unfriended me. Their silent move upset me, but also put into focus the superficial ties we had reestablished. If we had really wanted to rekindle our friendship, I figured, we would've exchanged something more meaningful, like text messages, or

See **FRIENDS** on Next Page

2021 NDEAM recap

By TIAVA TO'OMATA
SPECIAL TO THE SAIPAN TRIBUNE

This year's National Disability Employment Awareness Month celebrations were full of diversity, inclusivity and, for me personally, humility. The CNMI Disability Network Partners, an organization that NMPASI is a proud member of, hosted the 2021 NDEAM Employer Recognition Ceremony on Oct. 1, 2021 at the Royal Taga Hall, Saipan World Resort. During the ceremony, the CNMI Office of Vocational Rehabilitation recognized all the employers who have hired and/or trained individuals with disabilities in the past fiscal year. Additionally, NMPASI was able to provide education and training for the "Employer and Self-Advocates Presentations" on Rota, where various employers, advocates, family members, and interested community members were present. This highlighted all the available resources that the DNP can provide as support for individuals with disabilities.

It is no secret that the COVID-19 pandemic greatly affected on our already-suffering economy, with many businesses and agencies, small and large, cutting back on costs, furloughing employees, and unfortunately, even shutting down. Thankfully, through much faith and resilience from our community, we have been in the process of recovery. This year's NDEAM theme is "America's Recovery: Powered by Inclusion." The CNMI's recovery is likewise powered by inclusion. Inclusion is not just culturally rooted, but rather diversified by all walks of life in this community of ours. This is our indigenous people, our international folks, our young, our old and, yes, our people with disabilities.

One month of the year is not enough to recognize our employers for believing that people with disabilities are not looked at

Seasonal senryu sonnets

LITERARY NOOK

By JOEY CONNOLLY
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Joey aka Pepe Batbon Connolly is a retired educator who taught in the CNMI, NOLA, and LVNV. He is a sonnet practitioner who enjoys stargazing.



Space S.T.a.R. Salute Santa

Here is a popcorn garland string theory: a super nova explodes in the Milky Way many bright December celestial nights a light path for reindeer and Santa's sleigh Santa needs a break and has a hungry query where are the cookies in all these abodes some man'amko's eyes get a little teary driving around the island's streets and roads seeing all the bright Christmas tree lights at home many grandparents are cheery they smile as they exchange winking codes tonight kids have no toy or present fights volunteer workers eyes are getting bleary packing and filling toys for tots by boxloads children's eyes glisten filled with delights Santa's workshop is now seen more clearly inside the broken open crystalized geodes we have some polarized geological insights Mother mops and cleans the house wearily with plenty of heavy washing loads she separates the colors, darks, reds, and whites Xmas joys and sorrows come to us yearly mampus magical merry mirthful modes holy songs, beach parties, caroling nights Silent Night has been sung and is done on Tres Reyes decorations are taken down Saipan, Tinian, Rota welcome a setting sun New Year's cheer has come to town.

FRIENDS

From Page 8

maybe shared dinner.

But sometimes, even a flicker of a connection can be more profound than real ones.

I also saw on my timeline posts by people who had taken over the accounts of others after their owners had died. Dozens of

for what they can't do but for what they can do. So with that, we say thank you, employers, for focusing on one's abilities and strengths as qualified employees. The awardees of this year were from both the private and public sectors of our community are: Pepoy's Café & Restaurant, Herman's Modern Bakery, No Ka Oi Termites, Taro Sue Corp., Department of Lands and Natural Resources – Division of Agriculture, Garapan Elementary School, Public School System – Office of the Commissioner of Education, Triple J Five Star Whole Foods, Sun Palace Hotel, Office of the Governor, Center for Living Independently in the CNMI, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Finance – Revenue & Taxation, Delta Management, Department of Community & Cultural Affairs – Historic Preservation Office. Garapan Public Market, Kinpachi Restaurant, Dong A. Corp., Island Café & Restaurant, Commonwealth Healthcare Corp., and the Maternal Child Health Bureau. Thank you for opening your doors, breaking down barriers, and for being role-model businesses for everyone else to follow.

It is a privilege being able to witness and honor all who have continuously shown their allegiance of being inclusive in their workplace by hiring and training individuals with disabilities. The experience that I've been gaining in my short yet continuous tenure of working in this ever-evolving field is one of its own kind. Grateful is not enough to describe this, but perhaps humbled is close. Witnessing these real-life advocates, employers, employees and all who have a stake in being the reason for inclusivity in the workplace is far beyond anything the movies and TV shows can teach you. We have gone a long way from where we've began as a community and I can't help but hope for more in the coming years!

For more information about protections for people with disabilities in the workplace, please contact NMPASI at 235-7273/4 or visit us online at www.nmpasi.org.

Tiava To'omata is a program aide at the Northern Marianas Protection and Advocacy Systems Inc.

Human rights are the key to democracy

Democracies are fragile, and human rights aren't a given. That was the message human rights advocates delivered at the early December Summit for Democracy hosted by the United States and attended virtually by 110 countries.

The summit, convened by President Joe Biden, was meant to energize nations around the idea of democracy, but it was the human rights activists on the front lines who stole the show. Nathan Law, a democracy activist from Hong Kong who was jailed by the authorities, said "My experience embodies a prime example of how a city once believed to be the freest in Asia can deteriorate into an authoritarian police state right before our eyes. I've lived through it. For me, democratic backsliding isn't an abstract theory but a personal and painful story."

Zeid Ra'ad al Hussein, former U.N. high commissioner for human rights, spoke of the risks that come from dissent: "It's all fun and games until they knock on the door, until you are hit and dragged away in front of your children without a word of explanation."

Democratic governments would be smart to heed those warnings.

The U.S. strategy around the summit was to urge attending nations to make "commitments," including on human rights. Biden set the level of ambition by announcing the Presidential Initiative for Democratic Renewal, most notable for new funding to support investigative journalists and human rights defenders.

Just before the summit began, the White House issued an opening salvo against authoritarians by calling for the release of three political prisoners, from Belarus, China and Nicaragua. It also put on stage dissidents from nations both uninvited (Egypt, Venezuela, Myanmar) and invited (Uganda, Ukraine). The summit hammered home the point that dissidents should be given a platform, not a prison cell.

But the theatrics will only be credible if the U.S. government is self-reflective about its own policies that enable human rights abuses around the world. Consider, for example, that U.S. security assistance and arms sales continue to benefit rights-abusing

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

Impeach now!

I offer my complete support for the impeachment of Gov. Ralph Torres. The evidence of the governor's guilt that has been brought to light by the JGO is more than enough to give rise to his impeachment that is proper and necessary in accordance with our Constitution. Having viewed some of the hearings and read about the others, I'm more than convinced Gov. Torres has maintained a total disregard for our laws as he continued to break the laws and misuse of our money for years.

Impeachment is the only option for the people of the CNMI to find immediate relief from what is clearly a form of Torres' tyranny and to achieve some justice. It is now clear that impeach-

ment is warranted as neither the governor nor his executive assistant will testify and there is really nothing more needed to prove him guilty. Furthermore, we the people can't depend upon our attorney general to prosecute the governor because that should have happened long ago. The governor has continued to be a genuine embarrassment to the CNMI.

If the CNMI is to have any real chance of starting new reforms to rebuild our economy, Gov. Torres must be taken out of the decision-making process now! The governor has proven that he doesn't deserve to be our governor.

Do we really want the feds to get rid of this governor for us if we can't do it ourselves?

Ambrose M. Bennett

Kagman III, Saipan

or another. 2021 tried that tendency, so let's renew such grace next year.

I'll start. Frank, wherever you are, I'm sorry I muted you. I'm sorry that I took weeks to respond to a nice email you sent me this year, and I don't blame you for not responding when I finally wrote back. I'm sorry that I didn't follow up on my promise to unmute you, but I just did.

I looked you up the other day—you still follow my Twitter page. Let's talk again in 2022—lunch on me.

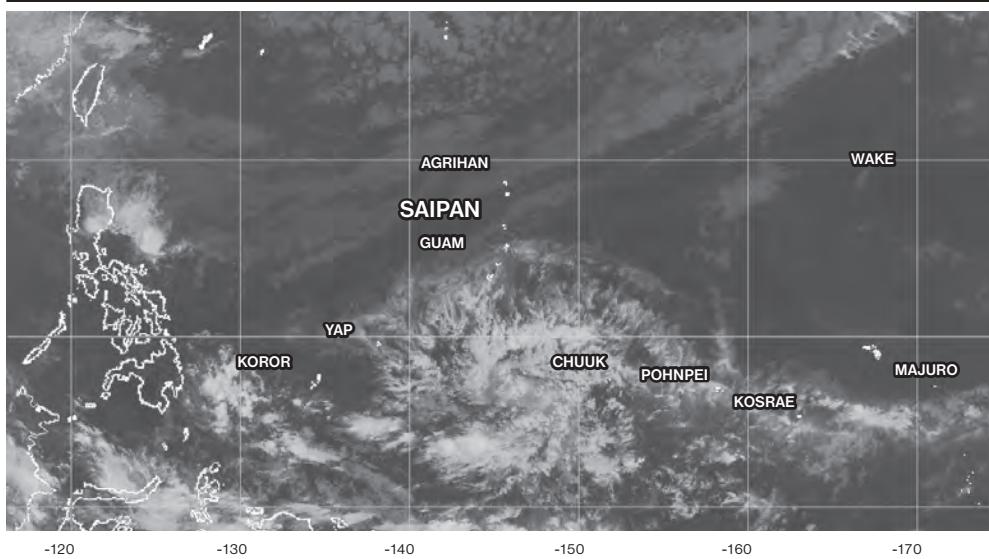


The Weather

5-DAY FORECAST FOR SAIPAN AND TINIAN

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Mostly cloudy. Scattered showers. East winds 10 to 15 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Mostly cloudy with scattered showers.	Breezy. Partly sunny with scattered showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
86°	75°	87°	76°	85°
75°	75°	85°	75°	85°
75°	85°	75°	85°	75°

YESTERDAY'S SATELLITE IMAGE



PICTURE TIME: 6:34 AM, MONDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2021

Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

This morning's Doppler radar imagery shows widely scattered showers crossing the region, as a shallow weak disturbance crosses the area. Infra-red satellite imagery also shows mid to upper level cloud cover increasing across the Marianas, especially Guam and Rota. This is emanating from a slowly developing tropical circulation well to our south. The latest observations from the Ipan buoy show seas holding near 6 feet, with a water temperature of 84 degrees.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

STOP THE SPREAD

The Governor's COVID-19 Task Force and Commonwealth Healthcare Corp. continue to encourage residents within the Marianas to practice social distancing, which means avoiding close contact with people in order to avoid catching the virus yourself and to avoid passing it on to others.

Ons. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.

- Stay home as much as possible. Avoid unnecessary travel or public places.
- Avoid social gatherings in groups of more than 10.
- Choose drive-thru, take-out, or delivery options, or outdoor seating, if available, when dining in.

■ Send only one healthy adult from the household run necessary errands, such as getting groceries or picking up medications. Leave children, elderly, and other vulnerable people at home as much as possible. When returning home from an errand, wash your hands before doing anything else.

■ Older adults and people with chronic medical conditions are at higher risk of getting very sick from this illness. People at high risk should stay at home as much as possible.

■ Create a household plan of action, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/checklisthousehold-ready.html>

■ Ensure a 30-day supply of all medicines.

Continue good hand hygiene

■ Wash your hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water, avoid touching your face, cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue or your sleeve.

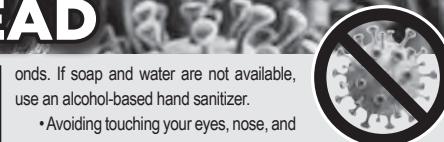
■ Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer if soap and water are not readily available.

Know the signs and symptoms of COVID-19 and what to do if you become symptomatic

■ Stay home when you are sick and if you recently traveled to a place with COVID-19. Self-quarantine means:

• Choosing a room in your house that can be used to separate sick household members from others.

• Washing your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 sec-



CHCC appreciates the patience and understanding of the community at this time. To obtain general information about the CNMI COVID-19 response, contact the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force Hotline at 287-0046, 287-0489, 287-1089. These numbers are available Monday to Sunday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For medical information about COVID-19, reach out to the COVID-19 InfoLine at the following numbers: 285-1672/1352. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm.

For mental health support and helpful tips during a crisis, call the Mental Health Support Line at 285-1856, 323-6560, 323-6561. These numbers are available Monday to Friday, 7:30am - 4:30pm. For the 24/7 Disaster Distress Helpline, call SAMSHA at 1-800-985-5990.

For more information about DIY face coverings, visit <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover.html>

For more information about CHCC programs, follow CHCC on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter at @cnmichcc, check out our website at www.chcc.gov.mp or call us at (670) 234-8950.

For more information on the Governor's COVID-19 Task Force, visit www.governor.gov.mp and follow @GovernorCNMI on Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

This health advisory may be found online at <http://www.chcc.gov.mp/pressrelease.html> and at www.governor.gov.mp/covid-19.

Source: Office of the Governor

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MICRONESIA		
Guam and Rota	Thunderstorms	86° / 79°
Palau	Thunderstorms	85° / 78°
Yap	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	86° / 78°
Majuro	Thunderstorms	86° / 81°

DAY	SUNRISE	SUNSET
Today	6:38 AM	5:51 PM
Wednesday	6:38 AM	5:52 PM
Thursday	6:39 AM	5:52 PM
Friday	6:39 AM	5:53 PM
Saturday	6:40 AM	5:53 PM

DAY	MOONRISE	MOONSET	MOONRISE
Today	-	8:08 AM	7:32 PM
Wednesday	-	8:57 AM	8:25 PM
Thursday	-	9:42 AM	9:18 PM
Friday	-	10:25 AM	10:10 PM
Saturday	-	11:05 AM	11:02 PM

AROUND THE GLOBE		
Auckland	Partly Cloudy	75° / 64°
Beijing	Sunny	36° / 18°
Hong Kong	Cloudy	68° / 55°
Honolulu	Showers	76° / 67°
London	Partly Cloudy	39° / 32°
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	79° / 51°
Manila	Showers	81° / 73°
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	77° / 55°
Miami	Mostly Sunny	76° / 64°
New York	Cloudy	33° / 30°
Osaka	Mostly Cloudy	52° / 36°
Paris	Showers	43° / 34°
Busan	Mostly Sunny	41° / 21°
Rome	Showers	55° / 54°
Salem	Mostly Sunny	60° / 37°
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	61° / 49°
Seoul	Mostly Sunny	30° / 12°
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	55° / 37°
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	38° / 30°

TIDES: SAIPAN HARBOR TODAY FEET		
2:50 AM	Low Tide	-0.49
10:10 AM	High Tide	1.62
3:31 PM	Low Tide	1.11
7:53 PM	High Tide	1.55

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF NOVEMBER 12, 2021

DEPARTURES				ARRIVALS			
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM)				GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN			
UA117 7:20am 8:05am 2, 4, 6				UA116 5:30am 6:16am 2, 4, 6			
UA117 9:50am 10:35am 1, 3, 5, 7				UA174 8:00am 8:46am 1, 3, 5, 7			
GUAM-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-GUAM			
UA183 8:00pm 9:50pm Daily				UA184 10:40pm 4:30am+1 2, 5			
				UA184 10:55pm 4:45am+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7			
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL)				MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN			
UA117/183 7:20am 9:50pm 2, 4, 6 via Guam				UA184/174 10:40pm 6:16am+1 5 via Guam			
UA117/183 9:50am 9:50pm 1, 3, 5, 7 via Guam				UA184/174 10:40pm 8:46am+1 2 via Guam			
				UA184/174 10:55pm			

Business

Restaurants anxious as omicron, high food costs take toll

DETROIT (AP)—While restaurants in the U.S. and United Kingdom are open without restrictions and often bustling, they are entering their second winter of the coronavirus pandemic anxious about what's ahead: They're squeezed by labor shortages and skyrocketing food costs and the omicron variant is looming.

"I'm extremely worried. I've never felt like we were out of the woods," said Caroline Glover, chef and owner of the restaurant Annette in the Denver suburb of Aurora.

The rapid spread of omicron already is pummeling the industry in Britain and elsewhere, with restaurants, hotels and pubs reporting cancellations at the busiest and most lucrative time of year. Businesses urged the U.K. government to offer relief after officials warned people to think carefully about socializing. Scotland and Wales have pledged millions of pounds for businesses, adding pressure for Prime Minister Boris Johnson's government to do the same in England.

"It's pretty devastating. For private hires, bigger tables of say eight to 16 people, those have pretty much disappeared. These are the bread and butter for restaurants at Christmastime," said Jeff Galvin, co-owner of Galvin Restaurants, a group



Amy Brandwein, chef and owner of Centrolina, prepares a dish in her restaurant kitchen, Thursday, Dec. 16, 2021, in Washington. AP

of five upmarket venues in London.

Many businesses said hundreds of festive corporate lunch bookings vanished almost overnight as infections began to soar and Johnson announced tighter restrictions, including mandatory mask-wearing in most indoor spaces, though restaurants are open as usual.

Glover in Colorado wor-

ries about renewed restrictions if infections climb. For now, business has returned, with her dining room back to full capacity—up from a cap of 50% last year—and four greenhouses outside booked far in advance.

Similarly, diners have returned and business is strong for Amy Brandwein, who owns the Italian restaurant Centrolina and a small cafe,

Piccolina, in Washington. After her restaurants survived lockdowns with takeout and grocery offerings, "I could safely say we're back to 2019 levels," she said.

But staffing remains a

challenge. In a recent survey of 3,000 U.S. restaurant operators, 77% said they didn't have enough workers to meet demand, according to the National Restaurant Association, an industry trade group.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

UK health boss: COVID-19 rules could tighten by Christmas

LONDON (AP)—Britain's health secretary has refused to rule out imposing tougher COVID-19 restrictions before Christmas amid the rapid rise of infections and continuing uncertainty about the omicron variant. Health Secretary Sajid Javid said Sunday that the government was assessing the fast-moving situation and urged the public to be cautious as scientists examine the data. Much is still unknown about the highly transmissible new variant, even as hospitals brace for a surge in infections, he told the BBC. "There are no guarantees in this pandemic, I don't think," Javid replied when asked about the potential for new restrictions. "At this point we just have to keep everything under review." Prime Minister Boris Johnson last week reinstated rules requiring face masks in shops and ordered people to show proof of vaccination or a negative coronavirus test before entering nightclubs and other crowded venues. He has championed a program that relies on vaccines, an operation that delivered 830,000 booster shots on Saturday alone.

United Arab Emirates to end censorship of cinematic releases

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—The United Arab Emirates announced on Sunday that it will no longer censor films released in cinemas, the country's latest effort to boost its brand as a liberal hub attractive to foreigners. Instead of cutting sensitive scenes that could offend traditional Islamic sensibilities, the Emirati Media Regulatory Authority will introduce a new 21+ age category for viewers. "The movies will be screened in cinemas according to their international version," the authority said

Many restaurant workers started new careers or went back to school. Jada Sartor of Grand Rapids, Michigan, saw her wages rise from \$10 per hour to \$16 per hour this year as restaurants grew more desperate for workers, but she recently quit her serving job because she couldn't find affordable child care.

"The cost of living is just so high you can't afford to really live," she said.

Kristin Jonna, owner of restaurant and wine bar Vinology in Ann Arbor, Michigan, said she raised wages nearly 40% to attract and retain her staff of 35. It was a change that needed to happen in the service industry, she said. But she can't hike menu prices enough to compensate.

"Everyone knows that beef is more expensive, but high-end, highly skilled labor is expensive, too," Jonna said. "That is the very tricky part of our business right now."

Jonna said the restaurant is humming despite high COVID-19 caseloads in Michigan. She has fewer large events scheduled, but the customers who are coming in are spending more.

in a Twitter post. Censors in the UAE, like elsewhere in the Middle East, have long removed scenes in cinematic releases that show nudity, homosexuality, sex and other content deemed inappropriate—sometimes leading to plot holes. Foreigners outnumber locals nearly nine to one in the federation of seven sheikhdoms. The diversity of culture and religion in the tourism-dependent country has at times been at odds with its Islamic laws and traditions. But that's changing as the nation promotes its socially liberal environment to lure international workers. The government has reformed its Islamic legal code and next year will change its weekend to Saturday-Sunday to align with the Western businesses and markets.

YouTube TV restores access to Disney after dispute resolved

NEW YORK (AP)—YouTube TV began restoring access to Disney content after a dispute between the companies led to an interruption of service over the weekend. YouTube told viewers Sunday they were restoring service so customers could once again watch networks provided by Disney such as ESPN, FX, National Geographic and local ABC stations. During the outage, viewers lost access to all live Disney content including recordings they had saved to their libraries. The outage stemmed from a breakdown in negotiations between YouTube and Disney over the contract between the companies, which expired late Friday. YouTube had wanted Disney to charge the company the same rate to carry its content that it charged other TV providers of similar size. The companies reached agreement Sunday. YouTube apologized for the disruption and said it would provide a \$15 credit to impacted customers.

Bank of Guam appoints Madrazo, Limtiaco as SVP's

HAGATNA, Guam—The Bank of Guam board of directors and management announced yesterday the following appointments effective Jan. 2, 2022:

Symon A. Madrazo has been promoted from vice president/controller to senior vice president/chief financial officer. Madrazo joined the bank in 2001 following his graduation from the University of Guam with a Business Administration in Accounting degree. A John F. Kennedy High School alumnus, Madrazo also attended a number of finance and accounting programs at the University of Wisconsin and University of South Carolina, and recently graduated from the prestigious Pacific Coast Banking School "PCBS" at the University of Washington in Seattle. He has earned a number of bank recognitions,



Madrazo

including Supervisor of the Year twice, and being awarded by the Employers Support of the Guard and Reserves

as Patriotic Employer Award. He has volunteered for numerous financial literacy community outreaches, as well as at the University of Guam Money and Banking Class.

Matthew E. Limtiaco was promoted from vice president/information security officer to senior vice president/chief technology officer. Limtiaco joined the organization in 2015 leading both HR Information Systems and Information Security. Prior to that, he spent 25 years in information technology and cybersecurity, both locally and in the U.S. He holds a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering from the University of Notre Dame and a Master of Science in Cybersecurity Management from Purdue University Global. An alumnus of Father Duenas Memorial School, Limtiaco is a Certified Information Systems Security Professional. He serves on the Notre Dame High School Strategic Planning Committee as well as the St. Francis Church Finance Council.

"I am very proud to announce the appointments of Symon and Matt, as each brings a depth of management and expert knowledge to build on the success of our organization," said Joaquin P.L.G. Cook, Bank of Guam president and chief executive officer. "We are confident of a seamless leadership transition for our organization under the capable hands of these two executives." (PR)



Limtiaco

Nation

Manchin upends Biden's agenda, won't back \$2 trillion bill

WASHINGTON (AP)—Democratic Sen. Joe Manchin all but delivered a death blow to President Joe Biden's \$2 trillion domestic initiative, throwing his party's agenda into jeopardy, infuriating the White House and leaving angry colleagues desperate to salvage what's left of a top priority.

The West Virginia senator's brazen announcement, delivered on "Fox News Sunday" after only a cursory heads-up to the president's staff, potentially derails not only Biden's "Build Back Better Act," but sparks fresh questions over passing voting rights legislation and potentially other significant bills that would require his vote in the 50-50 Senate.

Republicans heralded Manchin for a maverick move in joining all GOP senators now halting Biden's big social services and climate change package. But progressive Democrats mercilessly portrayed Manchin as a deal-breaker



AP
Sen. Joe Manchin, D-W.Va., walks to a caucus lunch at the Capitol in Washington, Dec. 17, 2021.

who failed to keep his word, and even moderates heaped on criticism after months of talks.

Whether the senator, a lifelong Democrat, is making a definitive break from his party also

became part of the discussion.

"We knew he would do this," tweeted Rep. Alexandria

Ocasio-Cortez, D-N.Y. Rep. Pramila Jayapal of Washington state, a leader of House

progressives, said Manchin can no longer say "he is a man of his word."

"If he doesn't have the courage to do the right thing for the working families of West Virginia and America, let him vote no in front of the whole world," Sen. Bernie Sanders, the independent from Vermont who chairs the Budget Committee, said on CNN.

With Congress recessed for the Christmas holidays, the next steps are highly uncertain. Some Democrats insisted on recalling the Senate to session to force a vote, though that appeared unlikely. Others were fast at work trying to win back Manchin's support and pick up the pieces of what one aide compared to a jigsaw puzzle tossed on the floor. Biden's reputation as a seasoned deal-maker hung in balance.

House Speaker Nancy Pelosi tried to strike an optimistic chord, assuring House Democrats and others that an agreement could still be reached early in the new year.

Fauci says omicron variant is 'just raging around the world'

WILMINGTON, Del. (AP)—The COVID-19 omicron variant is "just raging around the world," the White House's top medical adviser said Sunday as President Joe Biden prepares to issue "a stark warning of what the winter will look like" for unvaccinated Americans.

Dr. Anthony Fauci, the country's leading infectious disease expert, told NBC's "Meet the Press" that "the real problem" for the U.S. hospital system is that "we have so many people in this country who are eligible to be vaccinated who have not yet been vaccinated."

The prospect of a winter chilled by a wave of coronavirus

infections is a severe reversal from the optimism projected by Biden some 10 months ago, when he suggested at a CNN town hall that the country would essentially be back to normal by this Christmas.

Biden has been careful not to overpromise, yet confidence in the country has been battered by an unrelenting wave of COVID-19 mutations and variations that have left many Americans emotionally exhausted, dispirited and worried about infections.

Fauci, director of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, tried to defend the president's earlier promise in a separate interview Sunday on CNN's "State

of the Union."

"The idea about hoping and having an aspiration to be independent of the virus after a period of time is understandable and reasonable," Fauci said. "But the one thing that we know from, now, almost two years' experience with this virus is that it is really very unpredictable."

With the threat that rising infections could worsen the supply chain challenges facing the United States and fuel inflation, Gov. Jared Polis, D-Colo., said Biden should stop talking about vaccination as two shots and a booster and instead call it "three doses" that are needed to maximize protection.

2 babies survive tornado that carried them away in bathtub

Two babies survived a tornado in Kentucky last weekend that ripped the bathtub they were sheltering in out of the ground and tossed it with them inside, their grandmother said.

Clara Lutz told WFIE-TV that she put 15-month-old Kaden and 3-month-old Dallas in the bathtub last Friday with a blanket, a pillow and a Bible. Then the house in Hopkins County started shaking.

"Next thing I knew, the tub had lifted and it was out of my hands," Lutz said. "I couldn't hold on. I just—oh my God."

Lutz, who had been hit in the back of the head by the water tank from the tub, said she began looking everywhere

among the wreckage for the children. Her house was stripped to the foundation.

"All I could say was, 'Lord please bring my babies back safely. Please, I beg thee,'" she said.

The bathtub was found in her yard, upside down, with the babies underneath. Authorities from the sheriff's office drove to the end of her driveway and reunited her with the two children, she said.

Dallas had a big bump on the back of his head and had to go to Vanderbilt University Medical Center Nashville because his brain was bleeding, but the bleeding stopped before Lutz got to the hospital, she said.

Lutz said the parents of the children live on the north end of the county and their home was nearly untouched by the tornado.

At least 90 people have been confirmed dead across multiple states after more than 40 tornadoes pummeled a wide area last weekend.

In Kentucky, state emergency management officials and the state health department put the current count at 75. The governor, who said his staff believes there are an additional three deaths, said Saturday that all of the people reported missing in the state after the outbreak of tornados have been accounted for. (AP)

ACROSS THE NATION

Police: Officer fatally shoots man stabbing 13-year-old girl

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—A police officer shot and killed a man who was stabbing his ex-wife's 13-year-old daughter in a North Carolina home, authorities said. The teenager was taken to a hospital with life-threatening injuries on Saturday, according to the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department. The girl's mother fled after the man forced his way into the Charlotte home, police said in a news release. Officers found the man holding the girl at knifepoint and tried to "de-escalate the situation" before he stabbed her, the release said. "They were met with something that horrific, to see a 13-year-old getting stabbed, and they were left with no choice" but to shoot the man, The Charlotte Observer quoted Police Chief Johnny Jennings as saying. "The motive to stab a 13-year-old is something that is beyond comprehension for us." None of the officers were injured. The names of the knife-wielding man, who died at the scene, and the officer who shot him weren't immediately released.

Johnny Isakson, former Georgia Republican U.S. senator, dies

ATLANTA (AP)—Johnny Isakson, an affable Georgia Republican politician who rose from the ranks of the state legislature to become a U.S. senator known as an effective, behind-the-scenes consensus builder, died Sunday. He was 76. Isakson died in his sleep before dawn at his home in Atlanta, his son John Isakson told The Associated Press. He said that although his father had Parkinson's disease, the cause of death was not immediately apparent. "He was a great man and I will miss him," John Isakson said. Johnny Isakson, whose real estate business made him a millionaire, spent more than four decades in Georgia political life. In the Senate, he was the architect of a popular tax credit for first-time home buyers that he said would help invigorate the struggling housing market. As chair-

man of the Senate Veterans Affairs Committee, he worked to expand programs offering more private health care choices for veterans.

Closing arguments set for ex-officer in Daunte Wright death

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—Closing arguments are set for Monday in the manslaughter trial of the former Minnesota police officer who says she meant to use her Taser instead of her gun when she shot and killed Daunte Wright as he tried to drive away from a traffic stop. Kim Potter's case will go to the mostly white jury after Judge Regina Chu gives them final instructions. The judge has already told jurors that she will not make them deliberate on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day. They'll return after the holiday if they haven't reached a verdict by then. The defense rested Friday after Potter told jurors that she "didn't want to hurt anybody," saying during her sometimes tearful testimony that she shouted a warning about using her Taser on Wright after she saw fear in a fellow officer's face.

Suspect arrested in San Francisco killing, 43 years later

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—A man was arrested in Colorado on suspicion of killing a teenage girl in San Francisco more than four decades ago and detectives say he may be a suspect in other unsolved homicides. Mark Stanley Personette, 76, was arrested in suburban Denver on Thursday following a joint operation by San Francisco police, the FBI and the Jefferson County Sheriff's office, authorities announced Sunday. He was booked for investigation of homicide in connection with the 1978 death of Marissa Harvey. It's not known whether he has an attorney who can speak in his behalf. The 15-year-old New York girl was visiting family in San Francisco when she didn't return from a day trip to Golden Gate Park. Her body was found a day later, in nearby Sutro Heights Park.

World

WORLD BRIEFS

Typhoon deaths in Philippines top 140; mayors plead for food

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—The death toll in the strongest typhoon to batter the Philippines this year has reached at least 146, and the governor of an island province especially hard-hit by Typhoon Rai said there may be even greater devastation that has yet to be reported. Gov. Arthur Yap of Bohol province in the central Philippines said 72 people died there, 10 others were missing and 13 injured, and suggested the fatalities may still considerably increase because only 33 of 48 mayors were able to report back to him due to downed communications.

Osaka arson suspect identified, buildings to be checked

TOKYO (AP)—Japanese police on Sunday identified a 61-year-old man as a prime suspect behind a fire that engulfed a mental health clinic in an eight-story building where he was a patient, killing 24 people who were trapped inside. The government also announced plans to inspect tens of thousands of similar buildings nationwide. Authorities believe the massive death toll at the downtown Osaka building on Friday was largely because the fire made its only emergency stairway unusable. Osaka police, which are investigating the case as arson and murder, identified the man as Morio Tanimoto.

Indian man beaten to death inside historic Sikh temple

NEW DELHI (AP)—A man was beaten to death in the northern Indian city of Amritsar after he allegedly attempted to commit a sacrilegious act inside the historic Golden Temple, one

of Sikhs' most revered shrines. The incident occurred during the daily evening prayer on Saturday, media reported, after the man jumped over a railing inside the inner sanctum and attempted to grab a sword that was kept near the Guru Granth Sahib, the Sikh holy book. TV footage showed people inside the temple rushing to stop him.

4 dead in collapse of highway flyover in central China

BEIJING (AP)—Four people died and eight were injured after a section of a highway flyover in China's central Hubei province collapsed, according to Chinese authorities. The accident occurred at about 3:30 p.m. Saturday in the city of Ezhou, with about 500 meters (1,640 feet) of the bridge built over an expressway collapsing onto the roadway below, according to transport and police authorities. Three trucks on the bridge fell off it and one car was crushed under the debris, according to the official Xinhua News Agency, which cited local authorities. The expressway was closed due to the incident.

Vienna commemorates pandemic victims with a 'sea of lights'

VIENNA (AP)—Tens of thousands of Vienna residents turned out Sunday night to participate in a "sea of lights" commemoration for the more than 13,000 Austrians who have died in the coronavirus pandemic. The event, supported by dozens of civil society organizations, drew more than 30,000 people, according to Austrian media. They organized a chain of more than 13,000 candles stretching around Vienna's central ring road, one for each person who died in Austria, and observed a moment of silence.

In Loving Memory of †Juan Diego Camacho Blanco

(better known as Diego)
Born to Life on April 24, 1951
Called to Eternal Life on December 9, 2021

In his new life he now joins his:

Father: Juan Blas Blanco, Jr.
Mother: Constancia Reyes Camacho
Son: Ivan James Alafano Blanco
Grandson: Pierre Matthew Sablan Blanco

His Memory will live in the hearts of his:

Children, Grandchildren, and Great Grandchild:
Glen & Latti Palacios
Kebekol & Dee, Adam, Joseph (Carter), Anthony,
Ashlee, & Jesse Jade
†Ivan A. Blanco & Carmen Sablan
Lilly, †Pierre Matthew, Ivan, Kide, & Paige
Neimara & Bradley Weilbacher
Tiara Rose, Bradley Jr, Juan Diego, & Constancia Josepha
Jonathan Blanco
Jay & Mae Blanco
Cyprus & Likki Yoko
Hope & Reynanne Blanco
Kavid, Malorie, Constance, Gabrielle, & John Diego
Rodrick Blanco
Reese
Maggie Gordon

Brothers, Sisters, and In-Laws:

Ana C. Blanco & Family
Daniel C. & SamLee Blanco & Family
David C. & Amy Bohman Blanco & Family
Bertha C. Blanco & Family
Donald C. Blanco & Family
Leonora B. & William R. Colson
Joaquin C. & Makua Kabua Blanco & Family
COL (RET) Harry C. & Leah Blanco & Family
John S. & Ellen Pearl E. Blanco & Family
Antonia B. & Eric L. Plinske & Family

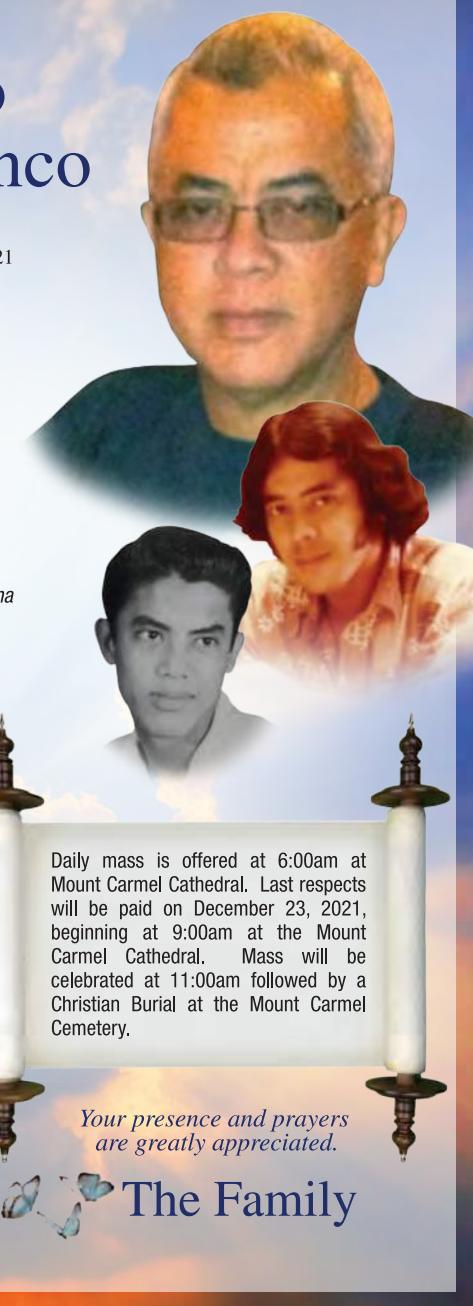
Aunts:

Victorina Camacho Sablan & Josephina Blanco Akiyama

Reared Sister:
Thelma Blanco-Blas & Michael Blas & Family

Best Friend: Steve Qian

He is additionally survived by numerous aunts, uncles, cousins, nephews, nieces, family and friends



Your presence and prayers
are greatly appreciated.

The Family

IN LOVING MEMORY OF REXFORD C. KOSACK

JUNE 15, 1953 – DECEMBER 16, 2021

Beloved husband of Clarie S. Kosack, father of Vanessa Aireen Kosack and Nicholas Alexander Kosack; grandfather of Chloe, Justin, and Joseph; and brother of Joan Kosack.

Please join us from 9 - 10 o'clock in the morning on December 22, 2021, at the Borja Funeral Home for a viewing and to remember his life.

Thank You
CLARIE S. KOSACK AND FAMILY



Death leaves a heartache no one can heal.
Love leaves a memory no one can steal.

Overdrive



The 2022 Hyundai Ioniq 5 EV
MARK PHELAN/DETROIT FREE PRESS, TNS

AT A GLANCE

Rear- or all-wheel five-passenger compact four-door electric SUV

- **Base price:** \$39,700 (excluding \$1,225 destination charge)
- **On sale late December 2021**
- **Model tested:** 2022 Hyundai Ioniq 5 Limited AWD
- **Price as tested:** \$54,500; \$55,725 including destination.
- **Drive unit:** Electric motors on front and rear axles
- **Output:** 239 kW/320 hp; 446 pound-feet of torque
- **Transmission:** Single speed direct drive
- **Battery:** 77.4 kWh lithium-ion polymer
- **Estimated EPA fuel economy rating:** 303 mile range, 110 mpge city/87 highway/98 combined
- **EPA estimated annual fuel cost:** \$650 (at current prices)
- **Wheelbase:** 118.1 inches
- **Length:** 182.5 inches
- **Width:** 74.4 inches
- **Height:** 63 inches
- **Curb weight:** 4,464-4,662 pounds
- **Towing capacity:** 2,000 pounds
- **Passenger volume:** 106.5 cubic feet
- **Cargo space behind rear seat:** 27.2 cubic feet

MOTORMOUTH

By BOB WEBER

Tribune News Service



Bob Weber is a writer and mechanic who became an ASE-certified Master Automobile Technician in 1976. He maintains this status by seeking certification every five years. Weber's work appears in professional trade magazines and other consumer publications. His writing also appears in automotive trade publications, Consumer Guide and Consumers Digest. Send questions along with name and town to motormouth.tribune@gmail.com.

Turn signal on, headlight off?

Q I've noticed on a number of cars that when the front turn signal is on, the headlight on that side is off. Is that a new feature and why have the light turn off?

A What you're seeing is sort of an optical illusion. When the turn signals are on, the daytime running lights (DRLs) are turned off making the turn signals more obvious. On older models of vehicles, the headlights themselves were illuminated at a lower power to provide the DRLs.

Q I've been told by a local auto repair chain that the rear shocks on my 2011 Volvo XC70 with 70,000 miles need replacing because "they leak." Photo of "leakage" shows a greasy smudge—no sign of oil or fluid leaking on shocks or ground/garage floor where car is parked. Further, the car handles fine starting, stopping or hard braking—there is no sway, bouncing or rocking and no unusual tire wear as I was taught years ago were signs of suspension problems—namely shocks. I am not convinced—what is your opinion?

A Shocks (and struts) leak from the seal where the piston rod enters the shock body. The rod is the slender shiny part. Leaks usually trickle down the outside of the shock body from that point. The leaks will not drip onto the floor. Grease and dirt on the body (larger section) means nothing. Based on your description of handling and braking, your shocks seem sound. But it doesn't hurt to get a second opinion because I'm not convinced, either.

Q A tree fell on my car and broke the windshield. The insurance company suggested I take it to a body and glass shop that they recommended. They replaced the windshield but were not able to repair the rain sensor. They installed an aftermarket, not GM, windshield. The shop further advised that the problem was a device in the rearview mirror that was malfunctioning. They refused to replace it. The insurance company directed me to the dealer. The Cadillac dealer said the windshield must be GM as there is something pressed into the glass to sense the rain and turn on the wipers and that GM can no longer furnish the original windshield, but I can get an aftermarket windshield that has been modified to operate the wipers. I am sorry that I allowed this small problem go this far, yet turning on the wipers is no big deal.

A Your car does, indeed, require a special windshield. Take this up with your insurance company and explain that you want the proper component, one that is equivalent to the original. Since the damage was not due to a collision, you probably paid the deductible under the comprehensive insurance coverage and should not be required to pay it again.

Q I have a 2004 Honda Odyssey with 245,000 miles on it. Do you think it is worth replacing the water pump and timing belt?

A If the timing belt breaks, the car will be worthless. Not only to you but to a potential buyer or as a trade-in. If you replace the belt, you may get many more miles from your machine and when you do sell it, you might even recover the cost of the job. In case you are wondering, the timing belt drives the water pump so replacing it now avoids another labor charge later.

2022 Hyundai Ioniq 5 EV

has crucial luxury-brand feature competitors can't match

By MARK PHELAN
DETROIT FREE PRESS

Every day, it gets harder to deny electric vehicles are the imminent next great advance in transportation.

Not because governments will mandate them. But because they're better than what we drive today. We're drawing ever closer to the moments most buyers demand EVs, then can't figure out how they got along without them.

The 2022 Hyundai Ioniq 5, a low-slung compact SUV that goes on sale shortly, is the latest EV to make drivers an offer many won't be able to refuse.

The first vehicle to use the South Korean automaker's global EV platform, the Ioniq 5 combines competitive prices with a fast level of charging so far only seen in luxury EVs costing many thousands of dollars more.

The ability to recharge batteries quickly is among the great remaining challenges to widespread adoption of EVs.

What is it?

The Ioniq 5 is the first vehicle to use a new architecture Hyundai-Kia developed to underpin its upcoming EVs.

It's a compact SUV, but exceptionally roomy. Despite being just 0.2 inch longer than the Tucson, Hyundai's conventionally powered compact SUV, the Ioniq 5 has a wheelbase nearly 10 inches longer, topping even the brand's seven-seat Palisade SUV for longest in the brand's U.S. lineup.

The Ioniq 5 is 13.6 inches shorter than the hulking Palisade, but takes advantage of its long wheelbase—and a flat

floor; no tunnel for drive shaft of transmission in an EV with front and rear motors—to create a roomy passenger compartment and cargo space.

The

Ioniq 5 seats five. It's available with a single motor on the rear axle or one on each axle for all-wheel drive.

The base model has 168 hp and a 220-mile range on a full charge. One step up is a 225-horsepower rear-drive model with a 303-mile range. AWD models have a total of 320 hp and a 256-mile range.

The base model has a 58 kWh lithium-ion battery. All others get a 77.4 kWh unit. The batteries are under the vehicle's floor, the most common engineering approach in current EVs.

The Ioniq 5's engineering and execution are impressive, but its exterior styling is relatively anonymous. Its signature visual features are rectangular headlights and tail lights ornamented by small dots Hyundai refers to as pixels, but the 5's profile fades into the ever-growing background of compact SUVs.

How's it charge so fast?

The Ioniq 5's fast-charge capability arises from being equipped to work with the fastest DC chargers, those that deliver 350 kilowatts, or 800 volts. They can charge the Ioniq from 10% to 80% range in 18 minutes. Porsche is the only other brand currently selling vehicles capable of 350 kW DC fast charging.

Most others top out at 150 kW (400v). At 150 kW—the more widely available DC charging rate in the U.S. now—10%-80% takes 25 minutes. That's quicker than many competitors. Ford says the Mustang Mach-E does

it in 45 minutes, for instance.

DC fast chargers become im-

portant to EV adoption because

they enable longer drives for vac-

cations and weekend getaways.

Eighteen minutes is closer to the time typically spent at a freeway gas station—stretching legs, getting a drink or snack, etc.—that most drivers expect.

EV owners do most of their charging at home overnight. They use 240v connections, generally getting a discounted rate for charging during off-peak night hours.

Charging an Ioniq 5 from 10%—lower than most EVs will ever get—to 100% at 240v takes 6 hours, 43 minutes, more than practical for overnight home charging.

How much?

Ioniq 5 prices start at \$39,700 and run to \$54,500.

The SUV qualifies for the maximum EV federal tax credit, currently \$7,500. That lowers the effective price range to \$32,700-\$47,500. Some states offer additional credits.

Ioniq 5 prices are very competitive with other five-passenger EVs.

Hyundai adds a \$1,225 destination charge to every Ioniq 5.

Driving impressions

I spent a day driving an Ioniq 5 on highways, city streets and country roads around San Diego. My test vehicle was a well-equipped all-wheel-drive Limited model.

Acceleration is excellent, a phrase you'd better get used to hearing in reviews of EVs. Unlike gasoline and diesel engines, which have to spin up to anywhere from around 1,500 to 5,000 rpm to generate full

torque, electric motors produce it all immediately. That gave me instant access to 446 pound-feet of torque in the dual-motor AWD Ioniq 5 Limited. RWD single motor 5s generate 258 pound-feet, respectable but not likely to set the world on fire. EVs are heavy, because batteries are heavy.

Despite that, the AWD Ioniq 5 was maneuverable, thanks to nicely tuned steering and the low center of gravity that's another benefit of putting the batteries under the vehicle's floor.

The Ioniq 5 was stable and flat around quick mountain curves, and at home on the highway.

The passenger compartment is roomy and comfortable.

Controls include a 12.3-inch landscape-oriented touch screen for navigation and other functions.

The jury's still out on how easy it is to do some common tasks, but one thing was immediately clear: The Ioniq could use dedicated buttons for heated seats. One of the most popular features in all vehicles, heated seats loom even larger in EVs, because they keep occupants comfortable with considerably less energy than heating the whole passenger compartment with warm air.

The Ioniq Limited I drove was well equipped, but sorely needed a wiper for its rear window. EVs are growing notorious for having carefully tailored aerodynamics that reduce drag but allow water to collect on the rear window, reducing visibility significantly.

A wiper would take care of that, but bring with it an aerodynamic and weight penalty. Conundrums like that keep product planners up at night.

Life & Style

Spidey nets 3rd best opening of all time with \$253 million

By LINDSEY BAHR

AP FILM WRITER

Never underestimate your friendly neighborhood Spider-Man, even with a mutating virus afoot. Despite rising concerns over the omicron variant, "Spider-Man: No Way Home" not only shattered pandemic-era box office records; it became the third best opening of all time behind "Avengers: Endgame" (\$357.1 million) and "Avengers: Infinity War" (\$257.7 million).

The Sony and Marvel blockbuster grossed a stunning \$253 million in ticket sales from 4,325 North American locations, according to studio estimates on Sunday, also setting a record for the month of December. The web-slinger's success couldn't have come sooner for a movie business that has had a rollercoaster 2021 and could be headed for

a difficult start to 2022 as the omicron variant of the coronavirus forces more and more event cancellations.

"This weekend's historic 'Spider-Man: No Way Home' results, from all over the world and in the face of many challenges, reaffirm the unmatched cultural impact that exclusive theatrical films can have when they are made and marketed with vision and resolve," said Tom Rothman, Sony Pictures Chairman and CEO, in a statement. "All of us at Sony Pictures are deeply grateful to the fabulous talent, both in front of and behind the camera, that produced such a landmark film."

In its five days playing in theaters internationally, it's amassed \$334.2 million in ticket sales, bringing its global total to \$587.2 million against a \$200 million production budget. The film has yet to open in markets like Thailand

and Japan, and there is no release date set for China.

As the third standalone Spider-Man film in the Tom Holland era, "No Way Home" was always going to be an "event film" for fans. After several delays over the year Sony planted its launch in the pre-Christmas frame and as of late last week had anticipated a pandemic-best opening in the \$130 to \$150 million range. But it quickly became clear that "Spider-Man" was going to fly much higher. The film netted an incredible \$121.5 million in its first day—bumping "Star Wars: The Force Awakens" out of the No. 2 position.

Directed by Jon Watts, "No Way Home" picks up with Holland's Peter Parker grappling with the world finding out about his superhero identity, and features Zendaya, Marisa Tomei and Benedict Cumberbatch as Doctor Strange. The

promise of spoiler reveals only added to the feverish hype that led to lines and sell-out showings across the country.

"For the target audience, this is absolute must-see, required viewing," said Paul Dergarabedian, the senior media analyst for Comscore. "There is no way fans were going to opt out because of omicron."

Many moviegoers also shelled out top dollar to see the film on the biggest screens possible. According to IMAX, an estimated \$36.2 million of the global total is from their large format screens.

"Spider-Man: No Way Home" is an exclamation point on the comeback we've seen at the box office in 2021," said Rich Gelfond, CEO of IMAX. "With these historic results, IMAX continues to see blockbuster releases generate box office at or exceeding pre-pandemic levels."

1. "Spider-Man: No Way Home," \$253 million.
2. "Encanto," \$6.5 million.
3. "West Side Story," \$3.4 million.
4. "Ghostbusters: Afterlife," \$3.4 million.
5. "Nightmare Alley," \$3 million.
6. "House of Gucci," \$1.9 million.
7. "Eternals," \$1.2 million.
8. "Clifford The Big Red Dog," \$400,000.
9. "Resident Evil: Welcome to Raccoon City," \$280,000
10. "Venom: Let There Be Carnage," \$220,000

"You made this possible. Your love and support means the world to me," Holland wrote on Saturday. "Thank you thank you thank you and if you haven't seen Spider-Man no way home yet... merry Christmas and you know what to do."

Before this weekend, Sony's "Venom: Let There Be Carnage" held the record for best opening of the pandemic with \$90.1 million.

But it wasn't all celebrations at the box office this weekend. In Spider-Man's wake were some high-profile casualties, including Guillermo del Toro's star-studded "Nightmare Alley," which grossed a mere \$3 million from 2,145 theaters. It opened in fifth place behind "Spider-Man," "Encanto" (\$6.5 million), "West Side Story" (\$3.4 million) and "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" (\$3.4 million).

Rapper Drakeo the Ruler fatally stabbed at LA music festival

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A West Coast rapper known as Drakeo the Ruler was fatally stabbed in an altercation at a Los Angeles music festival where he was scheduled to perform, leaving fans of the young musician heartbroken.

A publicist for the rapper, Scott Jawson, confirmed his death on Sunday to the New York Times and Rolling Stone. The artist's real name was Darrell Caldwell.

Caldwell, 28, was assaulted Saturday night at the Once Upon a Time in LA concert, which was expected to feature several artists, including Snoop Dogg, 50 Cent and Ice Cube. Organizers called off the festival after the stabbing.

A fight broke out behind the



In this March 2021 photo provided by Scott Jawson, West Coast rapper Drakeo the Ruler is seen outside a recording studio in Los Angeles.

partment and Los Angeles Fire Department also responded.

LAPD spokesman Officer Luis Garcia told the Los Angeles Times that no arrests had been made as of Sunday.

Music journalists and fans delighted in Caldwell's unique sound and boundless creativity. His death highlighted the violent demise of other talented young Black musicians, including fellow LA rapper Nipsey Hussle in 2019 and the highly influential Tupac Shakur in 1996. Both men were shot.

Snoop Dogg posted on social media condolences to Caldwell's family and prayers to those affected by the tragedy. "I'm praying for peace in hip hop," he said.

LA film critics pick 'Drive My Car' as year's best

LOS ANGELES (AP)—It was a showdown between Ryusuke Hamaguchi's "Drive My Car" and Jane Campion's "The Power of the Dog" for

members of the Los Angeles Film Critics Association, but the group managed to give top honors to both on Saturday.

The Japanese film "Drive My Car" was named best picture and "The Power of the Dog," a Western drama set in 1925, got runner up. Campion, meanwhile, received best director with Hamaguchi as her runner up.

Simon Rex took best actor for his turn as an ex porn star in Sean Baker's "Red Rock-

et," and Penelope Cruz was named best actress for playing a photographer and new mother in Pedro Almodóvar's "Parallel Mothers."

Supporting actress went to Ariana DeBose, who plays Anita in "West Side Story," while supporting actor was a tie between Vincent London for "Tigane" and Kodi Smit-McPhee for "The Power of the Dog."

The nonfiction film "Flee," about an Afghan refugee, got best animated film, while the documentary award went to Questlove's "Summer of Soul," which chronicles a largely forgotten music festival in the summer of 1969.

Common dog-walking habit raises stink with readers

EAR ABBY: I'm responding to your request for comments about your answer to "Doggy Business" (Oct. 28). Please IMPLORÉ your readers not to put their dog's poop in their neighbor's garbage cans, even if the cans are on the street. This may seem harmless, but I live near a park and daily dog walkers use my trash can like it's a public service.

My garbage quickly fills with endless poop bags, sometimes between five and 10 a day. Garbage is collected only every other week in my community. I'm sure your readers can do the math. Then I end up having to work around all this poop, and not only does my garbage can perpetually stink to high heaven, but I have to be judicious with what I throw away myself.

Rough materials will rupture those bags and poop gets all over the inside of the can. I'm currently saving up to modify my property's retaining wall so I can keep the receptacles away from the street, but I'm at the mercy of dog owners until I can afford this renovation.

Please, if you have a dog, be a good neighbor. Be responsible for its waste. If you don't want to carry it, get your dog a harness or pack with a pocket, and dispose of it in your own can when you get home.

PEEVED IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

DEAR PEEVED: I advised "Doggy Business" that disposing of his dog's waste in neighbors' garbage cans is a big no-no. After asking for readers' thoughts, an AVALANCHE of responses descended. The vast majority agreed with me, expressing disdain at the practice and explicitly sharing the messy, smelly details of their experiences.

Some areas require trash be placed in a large, sealed plastic bag in the receptacle. When garbage collectors pull the bag out, the small poop bags can spill out and the contents disperse onto the street. Worse, if the bags are thrown into a neighbor's garbage container AFTER collection, those bags remain at the bottom and smell for days.

Readers, encourage dog walkers to take a larger bag with them or wear a fanny pack with multiple compartments to transport their pets' "souvenirs" back to their own home.

DEAR ABBY: Our nosy children have been pressuring us to explain their inheritance. I'm appalled. I was taught that this is something for the parents to tell, not the kids to ask. Several friends of ours who are executors for their parents are now being questioned by siblings while the parent is sick and fighting for life. Please explain to readers what is the best etiquette with regard to inheritance.

UNSURE IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR ABBY

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact *Dear Abby* at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.



DEAR UNSURE: I know this can be a sensitive subject, but it is also an important one. Although some may not agree with me, I happen to be in favor of open communication regarding money matters. Too often money (and the promise of it) is used to manipulate and control family members. This is not a matter of etiquette. If adult children are going to inherit, they need to learn early how to wisely and responsibly handle money. And, if circumstances change and the estate is affected, the heirs should be given as much forewarning as possible so they are prepared and not shocked.

Abby shares more than 100 of her favorite recipes in two booklets: "Abby's Favorite Recipes" and "More Favorite Recipes by Dear Abby." Send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$16 (U.S. funds) to: *Dear Abby*, Cookbook Set, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Shipping and handling are included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes



By Bill Watterson

Garfield



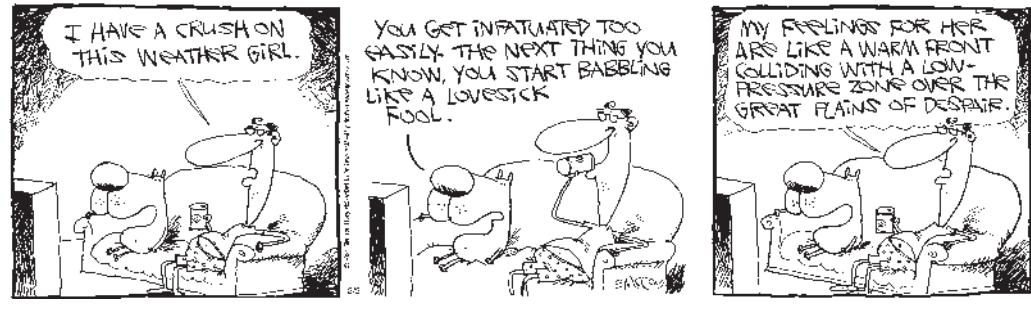
By Jim Davis

Adam@home



By Bryan Basset

The Duplex



By Glenn McCoy

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS	38	Maestro	4	Fr. holy	22	Aug. and	22
1 Story lines	39	Seiji	5	Paint	23	Sept.	
5 Young bloke	40	Cudgel	6	base	24	Church	
8 Vegan's no-no	41	Bread	7	Missing	25	seat	
12 Mob scene	42	spread	8	Gl	26	Luau	
13 Shock partner	43	Barrett or	9	"Lion"	27	memento	
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15 "Congratulations!"	45	Speed along	11	Patel	29	old Rome	
17 Satyr's cousin	46	Sci-fi race	12	Bakeware	30	Ages and	
18 Devious	47	9 Pub order	13	for	31	ages	
19 Snaky fish	48	Rap-scallions	14	breakfast	32	Towboat	
20 Frequently	49	"Death in	15	treats	33	Fourth-yr.	
21 Upper limit	50	Venice"	16	Part of	34	students	
22 Avril follower	51	author	17	Q.E.D.	35	Alias	
23 "The — Express"	52	Apt.	18	Flu	36	abbr.	
26 Trumpets' kin	53	divisions	19	symptom	37	Playwright	
30 Always	54	Peru's capital	20	Nashville's	38	Levin	
31 Condo coolers	55		21	st.	39	Levin	
32 Go sight-seeing	56		22	Innocents	40	35 Bar	
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Yesterday's answer 12-21

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-900-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Steven Yeun, 38; Ray Romano, 64; Samuel L. Jackson, 73; Jane Fonda, 84.

Happy Birthday: Take a unique approach to the way you handle money, contracts and legal matters this year. It's OK to do things differently and to climatize your strategy to current economic times. Understanding what's possible and how you can use what's available to you to improve your life mentally, physically and financially will help you excel. Think big, maintain integrity and embrace change. Your numbers are 9, 12, 20, 24, 36, 38, 47.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Watch how others react. It's essential to keep things fair and to offer as much as you receive. Your attitude will help you get the support you need and the rewards you deserve. Stick to the truth, and do your part.

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Play to win. Make necessary changes. Concentrate on what you do best, and finish what you start. Put your reputation on the line, and don't disappoint someone you love. A domestic matter will escalate if you aren't reassuring.

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Don't be gullible. Get the lowdown, and look at your alternatives. When in doubt, take a pass. Discipline will pay off, especially when it comes to emotional matters. You can't please everyone, so do what's right and best for you.

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Pay attention to price tags, bargains and shared expenses. Cast your vote to stick to a budget and to pool your resources to make your

dollar stretch. Working in unison with someone will have benefits. Plan carefully and make wise decisions.

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Monitor situations and pick up the pace. How you handle matters will dictate your reputation as a leader, a friend or a lover. Choose to be honest, and clear up emotional issues that are holding you hostage.

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Do something joyful, and spend time with loved ones. Get in the spirit of the season and reminisce. Remember who is supportive, and offer a token of your appreciation. Make a move that will alter your life.

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Be careful who you trust. Someone will misconstrue your actions if you don't say what's on your mind. Leave nothing to chance when dealing with matters that can affect your reputation or your status. Look for alternatives, but don't take risks.

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Convey what you want and what you are willing to give. Talks will lead to resolutions and help you come to terms with sensitive issues. A celebration is in order, and sharing with someone you love will improve your life.

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Organize. Disregard what others do, and concentrate on responsibilities. Rethink your budget and spending, and don't make unnecessary last-minute purchases. Listen to common sense, not someone's persuasive rhetoric. Choose to make a

promise instead of offering lavish gifts.

CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Draw on experience, knowledge and common sense; forge ahead. Share your thoughts and intentions with someone you love, and long-term plans will evolve. A change at home will need your undivided attention. An open discussion will ease stress.

AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Take the path of least resistance when you hit a crossroads that lacks continuity. Size up what feels right, then head in that direction. Don't fight an impossible battle when all that's required are patience and using your skills properly.

PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Touch base with people you enjoy being around, and catch up. A discussion will encourage you to think long and hard about the changes you want to make to the way you live and how you spend your downtime.

Birthday Baby: You are prompt, sensitive and questioning. You are intuitive and affectionate.

• Avoid conflicts; work behind the scenes. • You can accomplish, but don't rely on others. • Focus and you'll reach your goals.

• Nothing can stop you; go for gold.

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

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3	1		7	8	5	9	
8	1				7		
8	4		6	3			
6					9		
3			9	2			
2	5	4	8	7	1		
		3					

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's Answer

9	1	8	7	6	5	2	4	3
4	3	6	2	8	9	7	1	5
5	2	7						

Packers become 1st team into playoffs, win NFC North



BALTIMORE
(AP)—Aaron Rodgers threw three touchdown passes—tying Brett Favre on Green Bay's career list—and the Packers became the first team this season to clinch a division title, wrapping up the NFC North with a 31-30 win over Baltimore.

The Ravens missed another big 2-point conversion in the final minute.

With Lamar Jackson out with a sprained ankle, Tyler Huntley nearly led Baltimore (8-6) all the way back from a 31-17 deficit. His 8-yard touchdown run with 42 seconds left pulled the Ravens within one, but Huntley's 2-point conversion pass was incomplete.

It was the third consecutive loss for Baltimore, which also fell to Pittsburgh two weekends ago on a missed 2-point conversion in the final seconds. The Ravens fell into a first-place tie in the AFC North with Cincinnati.

Ravaged this season by injuries—especially in the secondary—Baltimore faced a difficult task trying to stop Rodgers and the Green Bay receivers. The Ravens mounted enough time-consuming drive of their own to keep the game close, but the Packers had the ball first after a 14-14 halftime tie and took advantage.

Baltimore appeared to have Green Bay (11-3) stopped on a third-down incompletion, but minimal contact by Kevon Seymour was enough for a pass interference flag. Rodgers found Aaron Jones for a 9-yard touchdown on the next play.

The Ravens drove into Green Bay territory before another devastating penalty. With Baltimore running the ball effectively and preparing to go on fourth-and-1 in the red zone, Ben Cleveland committed a false start. The Ravens settled for a field goal, and Green Bay drove 88 yards, taking an 11-point lead on an 11-yard pass from Rodgers to Marquez Valdes-Scantling.

That was Rodgers' 442nd touchdown pass, pulling him even with Favre. He went 23 of 31 for 268 yards. Rodgers has thrown for 13 touchdowns without an interception over his last four games and didn't appear the slightest bit limited by his toe injury.

Down 31-17, the Ravens began their comeback when Huntley ran for a 3-yard touchdown with 4:47 remaining. Then they got the ball back and scored again.

Tight end Mark Andrews had 10 catches for 136 yards and two TDs for the Ravens.

Bengals 15, Broncos 10

In Denver, Khalid Kareem snatched the ball from backup



Green Bay Packers wide receiver Allen Lazard (13) reaches but is unable to hold on to a pass attempt in the end zone in front of Baltimore Ravens defensive back Kevon Seymour in the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021, in Baltimore.

pass early in the fourth quarter for Miami, juggling the ball before controlling it and then letting loose with a wild celebration. The 6-foot-4, 310-pound defensive lineman leaped into the stands, then did "the worm" in the end zone as teammates danced around him.

Texans 30, Jaguars 16

In Jacksonville, Fla., Tremon Smith returned a kickoff 98 yards for a touchdown, ending the longest drought in the NFL, and then Texans beat woeful Jacksonville to end a three-game skid and extend their dominance in the series.

Smith somehow escaped five defenders near the 30-yard line—Jaguars safety Rayshawn Jenkins broke his right ankle trying to make the tackle—before coasting the rest of the way. It was Houston's first kickoff return for a score since Oct. 4, 2009. Every other NFL team had enjoyed at least one since.

Rookie quarterback Davis Mills won for the first time in eight starts. He connected with Brandin Cooks twice for touchdowns, once early and again late. The second one was a 43-yarder that sealed yet another Houston victory against Jacksonville.

The Texans (3-11) won their eighth straight against the Jaguars (2-12), sweeping their rivals for the ninth time in the last 11 years. The latest one capped a tumultuous week for Jacksonville, which fired Urban Meyer early Thursday to end one of the worst coaching tenures in NFL history.

Saints 9, Buccaneers 0

In Tampa, Fla., Cameron Jordan and the New Orleans defense gave Tom Brady fits again, shutting down Tampa Bay's high-powered offense Sunday night as the Saints put the Buccaneers' division-title celebration plans on hold with a 9-0 victory over the reigning Super Bowl champions.

Despite playing without coach Sean Payton on the sideline, the Saints (7-7) beat the Bucs (10-4) for the seventh straight time during the regular season—fourth since Brady left New England for Tampa Bay in 2020.

The victory gave New Orleans a sweep of the season series between the NFC South rivals and boosted the Saints into playoff position with a hold on the conference's final wild card. It also forced Tampa Bay to wait at least another week to clinch its first division crown since 2007.

The Bucs, who did win a playoff game at New Orleans last January en route to winning the Super Bowl, lead the division by three games with three weeks remaining in the regular season.

Defensive lineman Christian Wilkins caught a touchdown

quarterback Drew Lock on second-and-goal early in the fourth quarter to help the Bengals stay in the thick of the logjammed AFC playoff race.

The Bengals (8-6) won despite star rookie receiver Ja'Marr Chase being held to a single catch for 3 yards and Tee Higgins managing only 23 yards on two catches.

The Broncos (7-7) saw their postseason hopes whittled with their fourth home loss of the season.

Lock was in for Teddy Bridgewater, who was taken to the hospital in the third quarter for further evaluation of a head injury after he was carted off the field following a scary collision that also sent Bengals linebacker Joe Bachie from the game with a leg injury.

Bridgewater had movement in his extremities and coach Vic Fangio said he'd be held overnight for observation but was expected to be OK.

Tyler Boyd caught five passes for 96 yards, including a 56-yard touchdown throw from Joe Burrow moments after Denver had taken a 10-9 lead late in the third quarter.

Steelers 19, Titans 13

In Pittsburgh, Ben Roethlisberger ran for his first touchdown in three years and Chris Boswell kicked four field goals to keep their playoff hopes alive.

The Steelers (7-6-1) forced the Titans (9-5) into four turnovers and needed every one of them to win for the second time in three games. The Titans let a winnable game slip away, trimming their lead over Indianapolis in the AFC South to one game.

Despite the miscues, Tennessee drove deep into Pittsburgh territory in the final moments, but wide receiver Nick

Westbrook-Ikhine was tackled inches short of the first down at the Steelers 11 with 27 seconds to go.

Pittsburgh remained in the mix in the muddled AFC North despite managing just 168 yards of total offense. Roethlisberger threw for 148 yards to move past Philip Rivers into fifth on the NFL's career yards passing list, but it was his legs—and Pittsburgh's resilient defense—that provided the difference.

Cowboys 21, Giants 6

In East Rutherford, N.J., defensive end DeMarcus Lawrence forced a fumble and made two other big plays that led to 15 points and the NFL-East leading Cowboys inched closer to a playoff berth.

Dak Prescott threw for a touchdown, Ezekiel Elliott scored on a 13-yard run and the defense forced four turnovers, including Trevon Diggs' NFL-leading 10th interception. The Cowboys (10-4) won their third straight. Greg Zuerlein added three field goals.

Graham Gano kicked field goals of 35 and 42 yards as the Giants (4-10) lost their third straight game with backup Mike Glennon starting for the injured Daniel Jones (neck).

Lions 30, Cardinals 12

In Detroit, Kyler Murray's shaky performance against the team with the worst record in the NFL led to Arizona's first road loss of the season.

The Cardinals (10-4) started the day tied for the NFL's best record, but were coming off a loss to the Rams. The Lions (2-11-1) were mired at the bottom of the league standings before the first snap.

Arizona missed its chance to get in the playoffs for the first time since 2015 with a win over

a team it was favored to beat by nearly two touchdowns. The Cardinals can still earn a postseason berth during Week 15, but they'll need some other playoff contenders to lose.

And in any scenario, Murray will have to play better. The third-year quarterback was 23 of 41 for 257 yards with a touchdown and an interception, adding up to a 72.9 passer rating. Murray couldn't get away from the scrappy Lions when he tried to run, and finished with 3 yards rushing on four carries.

49ers 31, Falcons 13

In Santa Clara, Calif., Jimmy Garoppolo threw for 235 yards and a TD, while San Francisco ran for three more scores. The 49ers won for the fifth time in six games.

The Niners (8-6) scored touchdowns on four straight drives to make easy work of the Falcons (6-8) to remain in wild-card position as the sixth-place team in the NFC.

Atlanta got stopped at the goal line on its first possession of the game and lost a fumble on a strip-sack by Nick Bosa on the opening drive of the second half. That helped the Niners take control as they took advantage of the good field position to drive 38 yards to take a 24-10 lead on Jeff Wilson Jr.'s 5-yard run.

The Falcons settled for a field goal in the red zone on their next possession when pressure by Arden Key forced Matt Ryan into an incomplete pass on third-and-goal from the 4. San Francisco responded with a 75-yard drive capped by Garoppolo's 4-yard TD pass to Jauan Jennings.

Bills 31, Panthers 14

In Orchard Park, N.Y., Josh Allen threw three touchdown passes and Devin Singletary

ran for a season-high 86 yards.

Allen finished 19 of 34 for 210 yards while Singletary kept Buffalo moving on the ground and opened the scoring on a 16-yard run.

The Bills limited Allen's mobility a week after the fourth-year starter sprained his foot in a 33-27 overtime loss at Tampa Bay. Allen was sacked a season-high four times for 17 yards. He scrambled once for 26 yards in the third quarter.

Gabriel Davis scored twice, including a 20-yard catch on a post route for a 24-8 lead in the third quarter. Davis also scored on a 14-yard catch in the fourth quarter, and Stefon Diggs had an 11-yard TD grab in a game the Bills never trailed.

Buffalo (8-6) was at risk of its first three-game skid in three years. The Bills have won four of nine games and kept a hold of at least a wild-card spot. They can still repeat as AFC East champions, too, with a key showdown against first-place New England (9-5) next Sunday.

Dolphins 31, Jets 24

In Miami Gardens, Fla., DeVante Parker caught an 11-yard touchdown pass from Tua Tagovailoa for the decisive points and Duke Johnson rushed for two scores. The Dolphins extended their winning streak to six games.

Johnson, basically the go-to back for Miami as a last resort because of virus-related issues throughout the week, finished with 107 yards on 22 carries for the Dolphins (7-7), who rallied from an early 10-0 deficit. It was the first two-rushing-TD game of Johnson's NFL career and the first 100-yard game from a Miami rusher this season.

Defensive lineman Christian Wilkins caught a touchdown

Devin Booker returns, NBA-leading Suns rout Hornets, 137-106



PHOENIX (AP)— Devin Booker had 16 points in his return to Phoenix's lineup and the NBA-leading Suns set a season-scoring high in a 137-106 victory over the Charlotte Hornets on Sunday night.

After missing seven games because of a hamstring injury, Booker played 26 minutes, and sat out the fourth quarter with Phoenix well ahead. The Suns improved to 24-5, moving a half-game ahead of Golden State.

Phoenix had nine players score in double figures. Javale McGee had 19 points in 16 minutes off the bench, and Mikal Bridges also scored 16 points. Deandre Ayton had 15 points and 15 rebounds. Landry Shamet also scored 15 points, Jae Crowder and Chris Paul had 14 each, Cam Johnson 12 and Cameron Payne 11.

Phoenix was 20 of 41 on 3-pointers and shot 56.8% overall. Miles Bridges had 26 points for Charlotte, and former Sun Kelly Oubre Jr. had 16. LaMelo Ball had nine points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, but was 2 of 12 from the field and 1 of 6 from behind the arc.

The Suns never trailed, leading 37-15 after the first quarter and by 36 in the third. In the opening period, Ayton had nine points and nine rebounds and Mikal Bridges scored eight points. Phoenix shot 56% from the floor and was 6 of 10 from 3-point range.

Charlotte made just six shots in the quarter, shooting 21%. The Hornets converted just 1 of 11 3-point tries. Ball was scoreless on six shots in the quarter.

Phoenix, which has won 14 straight at home after losing its first two, scored a season-high 39 points in the third quarter. They had scored 37 in two previous games.

Miles Bridges had 26 points for Charlotte, and former Sun Kelly Oubre Jr. had 16. LaMelo Ball had nine points, 10 rebounds and seven assists, but was just 2 of 12 from the field and 1 of 6 from behind the arc. Ball was scoreless on six shots in the first quarter.

Hornets forward Cody Martin was placed in the NBA's health and safety protocol on Sunday, but there were no other players affected. Three games were postponed league-wide Sunday.

"Everybody's trying to do their best," Suns coach Monty Williams said. "We want to coach and play but we're all dealing with it. It's affecting everybody. Every time you hit refresh there's a new person in the protocol. It's unfortunate but we've dealt with it also."

The game was played with two game officials. Zach Zerba and Eric Dalen, originally



Phoenix Suns guard Devin Booker (1) is pressured by Charlotte Hornets guard LaMelo Ball during the second half of an NBA basketball game, Sunday, Dec. 19, 2021, in Phoenix. AP

scheduled, were held out of the game. Brent Barnaky, the other scheduled referee, was joined by NBA referee Bill Kennedy, who lives in the Phoenix area.

Williams and Charlotte's James Borrego worked together as assistants with San Antonio, and Borrego was on Williams' staff in New Orleans.

"I learned a lot from Mon-

ty," Borrego said. "He's a great leader, a great man. I'm thrilled for him where he has his program."

As for Williams, he thinks Borrego doesn't get enough

credit for Charlotte playing much better this season.

"You don't hear him being talked about as much as he should be," Williams said.

Bulls 115, Lakers 110

In Chicago, DeMar DeRozan scored 38 points after missing two weeks in the NBA's health and safety protocols, leading Chicago past Los Angeles.

Nikola Vucevic had 19 points and 13 rebounds, and Lonzo Ball added 19 points. Chicago played for the first time since Dec. 11 after two games were postponed.

LeBron James had 31 points for Los Angeles. Although the Lakers haven't had any games postponed, they currently have six players—Kent Bazemore, Avery Bradley, Talen Horton-Tucker, Dwight Howard, Malik Monk and Austin Reaves—and coach Frank Vogel in the health and safety protocols. Assistant David Fizdale directed the team against the Bulls.

Timberwolves 111, Mavericks 105

In Minneapolis, Karl-Anthony Towns scored 24 points, D'Angelo Russell added 22 and Minnesota beat Dallas in a matchup between short-handed teams dealing with recent COVID-19 issues.

Dallas, already without star guard Luka Doncic, placed two players in the health and safety protocols the past two days. Minnesota added Josh Okogie to the protocols and Anthony Edwards and Taurean Prince each missed their second game while in the protocols.

The Mavericks then lost forward Kristaps Porzingis in the third quarter with right foot soreness. Porzingis finished with 13 points and three rebounds.

Tim Hardaway Jr. had 28 points for Dallas.

Trail Blazers 105, Grizzlies 100

In Memphis, Tenn., Damian Lillard scored 32 points, Norman Powell added 28 and Portland beat Memphis to snap the Grizzlies' five-game winning streak.

Dillon Brooks scored a career-high 37 points for Memphis. The Grizzlies lost for the second time in their last 12 games.

Powell scored 20 in the second half to give the Trail Blazers their second straight victory after they snapped a seven-game losing streak with a home victory over Charlotte on Friday night.

Portland took the lead, 94-91, on a four-point play by Lillard with 4:02 left and reclaimed the advantage, 97-95, on a 3-pointer by Powell three minutes later. The Grizzlies had a chance to tie at 103 with 5.3 seconds to go, but Desmond Bane's 3-pointer rimmed out.

Pistons 100, Heat 90

In Detroit, Saddiq Bey scored 26 points and Detroit beat Miami to snap their losing streak at a franchise record-tying 14 games.

Hamidou Diallo had 15 points and seven rebounds for Detroit. The Pistons improved to 5-24, winning for the first time since Nov. 17 against Indiana.

Max Strus led short-handed Miami with 24 points.

Kings 121, Spurs 114

In Sacramento, Calif., Buddy Hield scored 18 of his 29 points in the fourth quarter and made seven 3-pointers to help Sacramento beat San Antonio.

Tyrese Haliburton added 27 points and matched his career high with 11 assists, and Damion Jones scored a career-high 23 points. The Kings won for the second time in six games.

Dejounte Murray had 25 points, nine assists and seven rebounds for San Antonio.

NBA postpones 5 more games; Young, Vogel enter protocols

By TIM REYNOLDS
AP BASKETBALL WRITER

The NBA on Sunday postponed a total of five games involving nine teams in response to rising coronavirus numbers, raising the number of contests that have been pushed back this season to seven.

Called off were three Sunday games: Cleveland at Atlanta, Denver at Brooklyn and New Orleans at Philadelphia. Also shelved were Orlando's game at Toronto on Monday and Washington's game at Brooklyn on Tuesday.

The postponements came on the same day that Atlanta announced star guard Trae Young entered the league's health and safety protocols and the Los Angeles Lakers said coach Frank Vogel also was added to the list.

Leaguewide, through Sunday evening, there were at least 75 players from 20 teams who have either been ruled out to play—or in the case of the postponed games, would have been ruled out—because they are in the protocols. That number has soared in recent days, with the NBA just one of many sports leagues worldwide dealing with a rapidly worsening issue.

"This isn't going to go away today, tomorrow or the next day," Dallas coach Jason Kidd said Sunday. "This is going to be here for a while."

U.S. officials are expecting a wave of breakthrough infections among the vaccinated given the surge of holiday travelers and gatherings expected in the coming days. The NBA has said 97% of players are fully vaccinated

and somewhere around 60% had received boosters as of last week. It was not clear how many of the current positive cases involve those who are ineligible for a booster shot or those who have chosen not to receive one. Kidd said that his team discussed concerns about COVID-related issues before his team played the Lakers—a team with multiple players in protocols—last week.

"We didn't have any COVID issues up to that point, until after they left," Kidd said. "Spoke too soon. And now we have COVID issues. We've got to just listen to the league and try to do the best that we can. It's not just us; you see games are being canceled."

Also not clear is how many of the NBA cases involve asymptomatic players. The NFL has revised its protocols so that only unvaccinated players and those experiencing possible symptoms of COVID-19 will be tested.

The NHL has six teams shut down through Christmas because of outbreaks, and numerous college games at all levels have been canceled in recent days.

"It is what it is. Just trying to stay safe as possible and that's all you can do," Lakers guard Russell Westbrook said of the NBA's rising numbers.

Westbrook was briefly in the protocols late last week, before returning at least three negative coronavirus tests and being cleared to return to play without missing a game.

The league and the National Basketball Players Association have been discussing a plan in which teams in des-

perate need of players would be able to sign reinforcements to 10-day contracts but without those deals impacting salary cap and luxury tax figures. That deal has not yet been finalized, though talks are continuing.

The Cavaliers had five players enter the protocols on Sunday, the team said. All five—center Jarrett Allen, forwards Lamar Stevens and Dylan Windler and guards Denzel Valentine and RJ Nembhard—tested positive for COVID-19, according to a person who spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the team did not release that specific detail.

They joined Isaac Okoro and Evan Mobley, who entered the protocols previously.

Vogel wasn't on the bench when his Lakers played Sunday at Chicago. David Fizdale will coach in Vogel's place, the Lakers said. The Bulls returned to the court after having two games postponed last week.

A number of assistant coaches and referees are also in the protocols, along with the 75 players. Among the players added Sunday was Golden State's Andrew Wiggins, who was reluctantly vaccinated before the season to play home games in San Francisco.

In Phoenix on Sunday, officials Zach Zarba and Eric Dalen were both scheduled to work the Suns game against Charlotte but were later put into the protocols. Bill Kennedy was brought in to work the game as part of a two-man crew with Brent Barnaky.

Chicago still doesn't have

all of its players back yet, either. Among those listed as out Sunday and still in protocols is Olympic gold medalist Zach LaVine.

"We've got to be able to manage and control frustration, anger, disappointment," Bulls coach Billy Donovan said. "That's not going to serve anything well. It's just not. The league is making decisions. We've got to follow protocol and keep each other safe."

Brooklyn has a league-high 10 players, plus some staff, in the protocols.

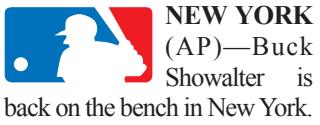
"It's just crazy," Nets forward Blake Griffin said.

Brooklyn's list of players in protocols includes Kevin Durant, James Harden and— even though he's still not yet able to play—Kyrie Irving, who has sat out all season for not complying with New York City's vaccine mandate. The team reversed course Friday and said Irving would be welcomed back "for games and practices in which he is eligible to participate," knowing he'd still miss two games at the Knicks and trips to Toronto and Golden State.

The Nets had eight available players for Saturday night's game against Orlando. The Magic had nine, including four players—Al-eem Ford, Hassani Gravett, B.J. Johnson and Admiral Schofield—who were signed late last week to hardship contracts because of virus issues and injuries decimating Orlando's roster.

Magic coach Jamahl Mosley had all four on the court together in two separate stretches of Orlando's win.

New York Mets hire Buck Showalter as manager



NEW YORK

(AP)—Buck Showalter is back on the bench in New York.

Nearly 30 years since making his name in pinstripes, Showalter has been hired as manager of the Mets as he returns to the Big Apple to take over his fifth major league team.

The former New York Yankees skipper replaces Luis Rojas, let go in early October

following two losing seasons. Mets owner Steve Cohen announced the move Saturday afternoon on Twitter.

Showalter received a three-year contract, according to a person familiar with the deal. The person spoke to The Associated Press on condition of anonymity because the length of the agreement had not been announced.

An official announcement from the club is expected in the next few days.

Showalter has managed more than 3,000 big league games over 20 seasons, giving the Mets an experienced bench boss for the first time since Terry Collins' seven-year tenure ended after the 2017 campaign.

New York has been searching for solid leadership ever since—in the dugout and the front office.

Showalter certainly carries

credibility, with a long history of turning around losing teams. No doubt that made him an attractive candidate to new Mets general manager Billy Eppler and the aggressive Cohen, who is spending freely on players and eager to win quickly since buying the bungling franchise in November 2020.

Houston bench coach Joe Espada and Tampa Bay bench coach Matt Quatraro were the other finalists for the job. Neither has any major league managing experience, and Showalter was thought to be the frontrunner all along.

Each of the three met separately with Cohen in person this past week during a second round of interviews.

New York also interviewed former Tigers and Angels manager Brad Ausmus as well as ex-Oakland manager and current Dodgers bench coach Bob Geren, who was the Mets'



Baltimore Orioles manager Buck Showalter stands in the dugout in the second inning of a baseball game against the Oakland Athletics, Thursday, Sept. 13, 2018, in Baltimore.

AP

bench coach under Collins when they reached the 2015 World Series.

The 65-year-old Showalter joins Hall of Famers Casey Stengel, Yogi Berra and Joe

Torre as managers of both the Mets and Yankees. Dallas Green held both jobs as well.

In addition to building a winner across town during the 1990s with the Yankees,

Showalter has managed the Arizona Diamondbacks, Texas Rangers and Baltimore Orioles. He compiled a regular-season record of 1,551-1,517-1 (.506 winning percentage) from 1992-2018, winning three AL Manager of the Year awards and taking all his teams besides Texas to the playoffs at least once.

The Yankees (1996) and Diamondbacks (2001) both won the World Series in the first season after Showalter left. He led Arizona to 100 wins in 1999 before losing a playoff series to the Mets.

His most recent managerial gig came with Baltimore, where he spent eight-plus seasons from 2010-18. Showalter guided the Orioles to three playoff appearances, one division title and a berth in the 2014 AL Championship Series, where they were swept by Kansas City.

in her next swim.

"I am grateful with the time I have because I got my personal best, but it is not the time I hoped to achieve. I did well and that's what counts, so I think I did great," she said.

Aside from the national swimmers and Kimura also part of the CNMI delegation in Abu Dhabi are Northern Mariana Islands Swimming Federation representatives Richard Sikkel and Hiroko Tenorio.

Saipan Swim Club, meanwhile, swapped their goggles and swimming caps for running shoes and finished in third place with a time of 1:47:23. The momentary land lovers team was composed of Michael Miller, Moshe Sikkel, Taiyo Akimaru, Jack Raho, and Takeru Jim.

NMA secretary general Robin Sapong congratulated all the winners and all the participants of the 2021 edition of the Christmas Island Relay. He also extended his gratitude to the Department of Public Safety for manning the intersections and managing traffic during the early morning race.

"DPS Traffic Division kept all participants safe from south to north," he said.

TEAM

From Page 20

ball Club midfielder said she and her teammates were also happy to finally be able to race in-person again following months of restrictions due to the recent COVID-19 surge in the community.

"We were all happy that the race was face-to-face because we were motivated to catch up to people and beat them," she said.

Coming in second in the youth division was Agape Team B made up of Hudson Tan, Allen Luo, Peter Peng, Joseph Li, and Peter Yang after the five-some crossed the finish line in 1:44:12.

Team Santa runners are joined by some of their parents after the team of soccer players won the youth division of Northern Marianas Athletics' Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday. **MARK RABAGO**

JINNO SUKE

From Page 20

for over three years already.

"Since 2018, the competition pool disappeared from this island and because of COVID-19, we could not even go to off-island meets.

Basically, you only improve in a 200m event if you repeat your race experience. Repeating races can make a swimmer get his race plan. Example, how fast you go

in the first 25m, 50m, 150m, and so on."

Kimura said Suzuki lost all his chance to train for the 200m freestyle this past three years because of the lack of an official pool and COVID-19.

"However, he endured the headwind brilliantly and showed us excellent results. FINA points of Jinnosuke's 200m freestyle is over 600 points and that is so amazing!" he said.

Next up for Suzuki is the

100m freestyle on Day 5 of the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships.

For Litulmar, while she failed to meet the 1:04 target set by Kimura, the 16-year-old MHS student still managed to swim her personal best in the women's 100m freestyle.

"Asaka looks in very good shape during training in Abu Dhabi. But unfortunately, she didn't reach her target. The result was 1:06.30," said Kimura.

Litulmar went on to lose to fellow Micronesian swimmers Jourdyn Adams of the Federated States of Micronesia (1:05.25) and Miner Gomez of Guam (1:05.54).

"I think Asaka had a good fight because Adams and Gomez are both college student swimmers. Asaka's main event is the 50m freestyle. It is coming on Day 5," he added.

Litulmar, for her part, took her missing her target time in stride, but vowed to do better

NFL STANDINGS

AMERICAN CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
New England	9	5	0	.643	367	227
Buffalo	8	6	0	.571	394	243
Miami	7	7	0	.500	285	312
e-N.Y. Jets	3	11	0	.214	250	428

South

Tennessee	9	5	0	.643	337	309
Indianapolis	8	6	0	.571	398	300
e-Houston	3	11	0	.214	207	372
e-Jacksonville	2	12	0	.143	196	370

North

Baltimore	8	6	0	.571	334	315
Cincinnati	8	6	0	.571	369	303
Cleveland	7	6	0	.538	278	289
Pittsburgh	7	6	1	.536	291	335

West

Kansas City	10	4	0	.714	385	296
L.A. Chargers	8	6	0	.571	379	370
Denver	7	7	0	.500	285	243
Las Vegas	6	7	0	.462	283	360

NATIONAL CONFERENCE

East

	W	L	T	Pct	PF	PA
Dallas	10	4	0	.714	401	293
Philadelphia	6	7	0	.462	337	291
Washington	6	7	0	.462	266	324
N.Y. Giants	4	10	0	.286	238	331

South

Tampa Bay	10	4	0	.714	410	306
New Orleans	7	7	0	.500	313	285
Atlanta	6	8	0	.429	258	384
Carolina	5	9	0	.357	271	313

North

Green Bay	11	3	0	.786	359	302
Minnesota	6	7	0	.462	344	333
Chicago	4	9	0	.308	231	332
e-Detroit	2	11	1	.179	243	366

West

Arizona	10	4	0	.714	378	284
L.A. Rams	9	4	0	.692	366	293
San Francisco	8	6	0	.571	360	314
Seattle	5	8	0	.385	272	262

e-eliminated from playoffs

y-clinched division

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS



Packers become 1st team into playoffs, win NFC North

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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Jinnosuke earns 600 FINA points

» Asaka sets PB in 100m free

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

It was Jinnosuke Suzuki and Asaka Litulmar's turn to make their individual debuts in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Saturday inside the cavernous Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.



Asaka Litulmar completes her stint in the 100m freestyle event in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Saturday inside the cavernous Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Jinnosuke Suzuki, middle, at the starting block of his men's 200m freestyle event in the 15th FINA World Swimming Championships last Saturday inside the cavernous Etihad Arena in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The two CNMI National Swimming Team members had mixed results in the pool.

Suzuki earned over 600 FINA points after the 16-year-old Marianas High School student broke the 2-minute barrier in his men's 200m freestyle event with a time of 1:57.27.

"I am happy with the results of my 200m freestyle because I was able to cut 2



minutes off my time," said the Tsunami Saipan Swimming Center co-captain.

National swimming coach Hiroyuki Kimura couldn't hide his pleasure for Suzuki's feat in the men's 200m freestyle.

"His older brother Lenno-

suke who is a CNMI record-holder participated in the last FINA Swimming Championships in Hangzhou, China. His time was 2:06.54. I mentioned before that Jinnosuke is super faster than his brother. If we have a long course meet, Jinnosuke would've broken his brother's CNMI record without fail," he said.

The 15th FINA World

Swimming Championships in the UAE capital is a short course (25m) competition.

What's more impressive, according to Kimura, is his ward was able to cut 2 minutes from his personal best without the benefit of training in an Olympic-sized pool as the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool in Marpi has been mothballed

See JINNOSUKE on Page 19

Team Santa jingles to youth division title

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR


Team Santa didn't need Rudolph's help in winning the youth division of Northern Marianas Athletics' Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday.

The team, which is made up of soccer players Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez, Dev Ashok Bachani, Cody Shimizu, Anthony Bergancia, and Markus Toves, completed the 13.7-mile long race from the Pacific Islands Club Saipan in San Antonio to the Last Command Post in Marpi in a time of 1:31:04.

Team Santa captain Chavez said they're happy all their hard work and sacrifice paid off by winning the youth division of the Christmas Island Relay.



From left, Team Santa runners, Andrei Kaithlyn Chavez, Anthony Bergancia, Dev Ashok Bachani, Cody Shimizu, and Markus Toves cross the finish line first in the youth division of Northern Marianas Athletics' Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday.

MARK RABAGO

time so yes definitely a great win. The race was somewhat hard but me and my teammates we all just pushed ourselves to get the win. Thank you to all

our families and people who supported us throughout the race," she said.

The TanHoldings Foot-
See TEAM on Page 19

Suda super in Fil-Taga December Ace

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSOCIATE EDITOR



Burt Suda topped the Fil-Taga Golfers Association December Ace last Saturday, Dec. 18, at the Kingfisher Golf Links in Talafofo.

The 53-year-old golfer shot a net 72 to win the final monthly tournament of the year. The Chuuk-born but Saipan-raised Suda actually finished with a gross of 90, but his 18 handicap gave him the score to beat among qualified golfers in December.

Freddie Cataluna actually fired a tourney best net 69 in December built around a 71 gross and low 2 handicap. However, he

See SUDA on Page 19

Suda

